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50¢/Free to Deployed Areas

Stuck in the middle



U.S. soldiers patrol in August outside of Manbij, Syria.
NICOLE PASEZ
Courtesy of the U.S. Army

US troops face peril on many fronts in Syria

By LIZ SLY
The Washington Post

This ruined, fearful city was once Islamic State's capital, the showcase of its caliphate and a magnet for foreign fighters from around the globe.

'We are surrounded by enemies, and they all want to come here.'

Mohammed Mustafa Ali
head of the Manbij Military Council

Now it lies at the heart of the U.S.'s newest commitment to a Middle East war.

The commitment is small, a few thousand troops who were first sent to Syria three years ago to help the Syrian Kurds fight ISIS. President Donald Trump indicated in March that the troops should be brought

SEE PERIL ON PAGE 5

Rising Chinese influence in Djibouti could threaten US base

By PATRICK MARTIN
The Washington Post

When unveiling the Trump administration's new Africa policy on Thursday, national security adviser John Bolton made a point to speak about a single container port in the tiny

East African nation of Djibouti. Officials say the Doraleh Container Terminal is critical for resupplying the only permanent U.S. base in Africa, and Bolton said China could take control of this port.

While Djibouti is slightly smaller than New

Jersey and has a population of less than 1 million, its strategic location gives it an outsized influence. At the southern end of the Red Sea, Djibouti is on the shipping route between Asia and the Suez Canal. Every day, an estimated

SEE INFLUENCE ON PAGE 7

Army Sgt. Tyler Sylvia conducts exercises in November at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, the U.S.'s only permanent military base in Africa. The base is supplied by a single container port, the access to which could be threatened by China's increasing influence in the East African nation.

SHANNON D. BARNWELL/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy



MILITARY

Federal workers unsure how to access PCS tax benefits

By CAITLIN DOORNBOS
Stars and Stripes

Guidance on moving-expense tax relief for federal workers was issued over the summer, but some employees are still unsure about how to access the benefits.

When the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 redefined employer-paid and reimbursed moving expenses as taxable income, federal workers moving after Jan. 1, 2018, were suddenly saddled with tax burdens for permanent-change-of-station moves that can cost thousands of dollars.

The General Services Administration in a May bulletin clarified that agencies could reimburse "substantially all" moving-related tax expenses for civilians who go from one federal job to another through Withholding Tax Allowance and Relocation Income Tax Allowance payments.

However, new employees and retiring employees are not eligible.

Despite the announcement, many WTA- and RITA-eligible employees are still unaware of how to apply for the reimbursements, according to a statement by Democratic Virginia Sens. Tim Kaine and Mark Warner. The pair asked the GSA last month to encourage federal agencies to "proactively" help federal workers who have moved since Jan. 1 understand the process.

"RITA reimbursements can only be issued in the year following the additional taxes, meaning

‘Unfortunately, it appears that at least some federal agencies are not proactively informing their workers about the option to use the [Withholding Tax Allowance].’

Sens. Tim Kaine and Mark Warner
D-Va.

workers could be waiting months, or over a year, to get reimbursed," the senators said in the statement. "Federal workers may have to take on debt or borrow from their retirement accounts to carry these costs as they await reimbursement."

The WTA program is meant to avoid this problem, as it provides funds earlier than RITA to help "federal workers who are unable to bear the delay of RITA reimbursements," according to the statement.

"Unfortunately, it appears that at least some federal agencies are not proactively informing their workers about the option to use the WTA," the senators said in the statement.

The Federal Education Association has been lobbying Congress on behalf of Department of Defense Education Activity employees since the new tax law was implemented. In a Nov. 23 statement, the group said the senators' actions were in part prompted by information from the National Education Association regarding "the lack of clear information being presented to existing federal

employees about tax relief available to them through the [RITA] and [WTA] programs."

The FEA said informing employees of resources available an "obligation" of management.

"We hope the senators' actions will prompt DODEA to quickly provide its employees with better and more useful information on RITA and WTA, including how those programs work and how to apply for them," the FEA said in the statement.

But not everyone is eligible for RITA and WTA reimbursements. The law only allows for "employees" to receive the payments — so incoming hires and separating former employees are ineligible.

Many new hires and retirees are reporting they have not been told about the tax burden they will face on their moves. The FEA last month accused DODEA management of not doing enough to ensure that incoming and outgoing employees are aware of the taxes that await them under the new law.

"This entire tax situation is an unfair burden on civilian employees, and DODEA's lack of candor



Courtesy of Pixabay

When the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 redefined employer-paid and reimbursed moving expenses as taxable income, federal workers moving after Jan. 1 were suddenly saddled with tax burdens for permanent-change-of-station moves.

to its incoming and departing employees about the tax situation speaks volumes about management's present negative attitude toward those who work in its schools in service to military families," FEA said in the statement.

DODEA spokesman Frank O'Gara told Stars and Stripes in an email last week that the agency is "awaiting definitive guidance from [the Department of Defense] prior to providing communication to all employees on the changes" to "ensure consistency of information."

"We have provided related information as received to our union partners and have coordinated with our HR servicing personnel at [the Civilian Human Resources Agency] to include notices for new, transferring and retiring personnel that there are changes in the tax law that may result in taxable expenses for moves," O'Gara said.

Kaine and Warner, along with

Sens. Susan Collins, R-Maine, Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., and Mazie Hirono, D-Hawaii, presented a bill to Congress last summer that would fix the issue for new and retiring employees. However, it has not made any progress since it was read into the record and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security July 18.

New and retiring employees who have moved after Jan. 1 are still expected to pay taxes on moving expenses without relief.

"There is now little chance of legislation being passed this year to provide relief to retiring/separating federal employees or to incoming feds, both of whom are now facing massive tax bills on the moving assistance/allowances they received as DODEA workers," the FEA wrote in its statement.

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PACIFIC



CARLOS VAZQUEZ/Stars and Stripes

Construction equipment is visible at Camp Schwab, Okinawa, Dec. 4. Construction for a new runway at the site began Friday.

Relocation project draws protests

Landfill works begins on controversial Futenma facility site in Okinawa

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — Landfill on a controversial new U.S. military runway that will one day facilitate the relocation and closure of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma began Friday in Okinawa following years of protests and legal challenges.

Construction began before noon at Camp Schwab — a Marine Base in Henoko — as workers pumped water out of a walled-off footprint of the runway in Oura Bay and began to replace it with soil, Okinawa Defense Bureau spokesman Masashi Katsuren told Stars and Stripes.

“We are pumping the water out and reclaiming with dirt at the same time,” Katsuren said. “Of course we are following the prefectural guidance on red soil spill prevention to protect the environment.”

Futenma is in a densely populated urban area in the central part of the island. Relocating air operations to the remote northern coast is the latest move by the U.S.-Japan

alliance to consolidate vast U.S. military holdings on the island. It is also seen as a safer and less intrusive alternative.

A small but passionate protest movement — backed by popular support — has stood fervently opposed to the relocation of Marine air operations within the prefecture.

Nago police said that while there were more protesters outside Schwab’s front gate than usual, they declined to estimate the number. No arrests had been made as of Friday evening.

Past Okinawan governors and local politicians have tried everything in their power to derail the project, but Tokyo and its allies in Washington have remained steadfast that it is the “only solution.”

While the landfill work has been years in the making and is a significant step toward completing the runway, Katsuren said the .02 square-mile section being filled, called “area 2-1,” represents only 4 percent of the .6 square-mile reclamation project.

Area 2-1 is scheduled to be completed by July 31, 2020.

“We cannot comment when the entire reclamation will be completed at this mo-

ment,” Katsuren said.

Okinawa Gov. Dennis Tamaki tried unsuccessfully Thursday to lobby both Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga and Defense Minister Takeshi Iwaya against moving ahead with the landfill, Kyodo news agency reported. Suga apparently told Tamaki that while the government “recognizes the position of Okinawa” the work would proceed.

The meetings in Tokyo came a day after the prefectural government sent a letter of administrative guidance to Okinawa Defense Bureau, calling the decision to proceed with landfill work illegal and not permitted. Okinawa asked the bureau to halt the construction immediately. However, the guidance was not legally binding.

Tamaki was apologetic Friday.

“I have demanded a halt to the reclamation work at Henoko; however, I am furious about how the government disregarded Okinawa and is forcing [it],” he said, according to a statement released by his office.

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Bullet that hit shed came from Marines’ firing range

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A large caliber bullet that struck an Okinawan mango farmer’s shed in June came from a Marine Corps firing range, Japanese officials announced last week.

The incident occurred June 21 in Sukuta, Nago, adjacent to the northern Marine base Camp Schwab’s Range 10.

The incident led to condemnation by local politicians on the small island prefecture along with a criminal complaint that sought to charge then-III Marine Expeditionary Force commander Lt. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson and others with attempted murder.

The bullet was fired by III MEF, the Okinawa Defense Bureau, which represents Japan’s Defense Ministry on the island, said Friday. The agency cited Okinawa Prefectural Police and U.S. military admissions that came Wednesday.

“After a thorough investigative process, the bullet was identified to have originated from a unit conducting routine training on Range 10,” Marine officials said in a statement Friday to Stars and Stripes.

“We take the safety of all our ranges very seriously.”

During the live-fire exercise, a Marine “did not follow the Range 10 regulations and procedures,” defense bureau spokesman Masashi Katsuren said Friday.

In a rare rebuke, the bureau announced that live-fire drills using .50-caliber ammunition would be halted until the U.S. military finds a “solid solution” to preventing future incidents, Katsuren said. The bureau also demanded that the U.S. raise safety standards for live-fire exercises.

No injuries were reported in the incident, which occurred sometime between 11 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., according to police. The farmer told authorities he had come home from shopping to discover two broken windows in his shed and a 2-inch-long bullet on the floor.

Bureau officials said Camp Schwab’s Range 10, which is approximately a half-mile from the farm, was in use at the time of the incident and they had been warned about the live-fire training.

The Marines vowed to cooperate in any investigation and temporarily shuttered the range as a “precaution.”

Police conducted ballistics testing on the bullet and determined it had been recently fired, a police spokesman said at the time. They attempted to match it with bullets fired from the range, however, the investigation stalled when the Marines did not respond to requests for assistance.

On July 2, nine local legislators filed a criminal complaint with police seeking to charge Nicholson, Camp Smedley D. Butler’s headquarters and support battalion commander Col. William DePue and a group of unidentified Marines who were training at the time of the incident with destruction of property and attempted murder.

However, police did not pursue the case. The lawmakers said they hoped the complaint would force police to conduct a more thorough investigation and compel the Marines’ participation.

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Japanese court upholds protester’s conviction

By MATTHEW M. BURKE
AND AYA ICHIHASHI
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — A Japanese high court has upheld a guilty verdict for an Okinawan protest leader convicted of anti-U.S. base activities on the southern island prefecture.

Hiroji Yamashiro, 66, chairman of the Okinawa Peace Activity Center, was convicted in March of a string of offenses that included cutting barbed wire on a fence surrounding a U.S. military installation. He has stood in fervent opposition to relocating Marine Corps Air Station Futenma operations to rural Camp Schwab and has become the de facto leader of Okinawa’s protest movement.

Yamashiro was sentenced to two years in prison with hard labor after trial in Naha District Court; however, that sentence was suspended for three years. An appeal was denied Thursday by Fukuoka High Court head judge Masamichi Ohkubo.

“The government kept ignoring the Okinawa people’s feelings and continuously disregarding Okinawa people and this should not happen in a democracy,” Yamashiro said after Thursday’s

verdict, according to Okinawa Peace Activity Center spokesman Takashi Kishimoto.

Work landfilling a portion of Oura Bay at Schwab in Henoko continued Friday for a runway decades in the making. Its completion will facilitate the closure and relocation of Futenma’s air assets.

Yamashiro was detained in October 2016 after police said he cut a strand of barbed wire on a perimeter fence at Okinawa’s Northern Training Area while protesting the construction of helicopter landing pads. Three days later, police added additional charges — such as obstructing businesses and law enforcement — for incidents that happened months before.

His incarceration led to protests and his Okinawa Peace Activity Center collected more than 316,000 signatures demanding the court drop the charges.

He was released on \$64,000 bail in March 2017 after the condemnation of human-rights groups such as Amnesty International and the U.S. anti-war group Veterans for Peace.

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EUROPE

USO to end Discover program in Germany

By JENNIFER H. SVAN
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — The USO plans to discontinue its popular Discover program in Germany, bringing an end to free train trips and tours that introduced military personnel and their families to local attractions.

The program will end in the Kaiserslautern, Stuttgart and Wiesbaden military communities at the end of December, Walter Murren, USO Europe regional vice president, said Friday.

Murren said the USO in Kaiserslautern will still provide downtown orientations for Army and Air Force newcomers, and free cooking and language classes will be offered in Germany, but on a less frequent basis.

Ending the Discover program will free up more of the nonprofit's limited funds for the agency's 20 centers throughout Europe and other programs that more directly support the needs of the military communities, Murren said.

"We're not stopping the programs we do at our centers and the outreach we normally do," he said. "It's just that we won't be focusing on train tours and stuff like that."

The USO Discover program began about two years ago after the USO ended its long-standing express and overnight leisure bus tours from Kaiserslautern, Stuttgart and Wiesbaden. Customers paid for a seat on those tours, which went all over Europe and brought in extra revenue to the USO. But the agency wanted to provide programs free-of-charge while avoiding duplication of trips and business competition with Army and Air Force agencies that offered similar excursions.

The Discover program introduced people to the German train system and the group then toured a local destination with a guide.

But Murren said a USO analysis found the Discover program also was duplicating some Army and Air Force offerings, and that some people were going on the same trips, "so we were orienting

people to the same thing."

Participants were limited to two free trips by bus or train and three classes per year unless space was available.

One of the final trips of the year will include a Dec. 27 trip to the New Year's market in Speyer.

People expressed disappointment that the program was ending after the news was posted on social media beginning Thursday night.

"This is very sad," one person wrote. "We saw most of Europe through the USO tours and I was lucky to be able to attend many of the cooking classes. Thank you for being there for my family and helping us explore the world."

The Discover program was "very popular," Murren said. "We love doing things for people for free but we've got to stay within the constraints of our budget."

The USO receives some funding for downrange operations from Congress, but donations from individuals, organizations and corporations provide most of its financial support.



Courtesy of the USO Discover Kaiserslautern Facebook page

USO Discover participants had a group photo taken during their trip to Saarbrücken on Dec. 1.

"We're not seeing budget cuts but more of a flat trajectory on funding," Murren said. At the same time, the USO has expanded the number of centers in Europe and its support to personnel deployed to Africa and Eastern Europe.

"Our centers should feel like home," he said. "That costs money to do that."

"The other stuff was a little bit of gravy," he said of the free trips.

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German museum, Army officials mark century since US occupation

By AARON KNOWLES
Stars and Stripes

HACHENBURG, Germany — A museum exhibit opened here Thursday with a ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of the U.S. Army's occupation of Germany at the end of World War I, a period in the interwar years that historians said is often forgotten.

Held at Hachenburg's Landtschaftsmuseum, the ceremony included speeches from Helen Patton, granddaughter of Gen. George S. Patton, and Maj. Gen. John Williams, mobilization assistant to the commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe.

While it highlighted the successes of the U.S. presence in Germany over the past century, it comes amid tensions between the two countries.

President Donald Trump has repeatedly criticized Germany and other European NATO allies, who he has said rely too heavily on America's military might.

In July, a YouGov poll found that 42 percent of Germans wanted U.S. forces out of their country.

At Friday's event, U.S. officials emphasized the continued importance of the partnership between the two nations.

"We were here and helped settle the peace following WWI. We departed for a little while and we did the same thing during WWII," said Brig. Gen. John Phillips, a staff officer with U.S. Army Europe. "Germany's prosperity is our prosperity."

The Army entered what is now Rheinland-Pfalz province to begin its four-year occupation in December 1918, after the Nov. 11 armistice that ended the fighting.



AARON KNOWLES/Stars and Stripes

Attendees of the ceremony marking the 100th anniversary of Germany's occupation by U.S. troops are the first to view the exhibit focusing on the historical event, in Hachenburg, Germany on Thursday.

The agreement also called for hundreds of thousands of U.S., French, Belgian and British troops to occupy the left bank of Germany's Rhine River.

Gen. John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force, created the U.S. Third Army for the job.

This involved controlling several bridges in the occupied territory around Koblenz.

Along with crossings in the French and British sectors, the Koblenz bridgeheads would have been key to an Allied offensive should negotiations for the Treaty

of Versailles that formally ended the Great War break down.

The Americans, nicknamed "doughboys," made the trek from France to their zone of occupation — some marching hundreds of miles through late November into December. The exhibit showcases photos and artifacts from their arrival and occupation in Koblenz and other areas of Rheinland-Pfalz.

The ceremony provided an opportunity to reflect on those events at the end of an "ugly war," Phillips said. It also allowed

for recognition of what he called "visionary emphasis" on non-retribution, rule of law and cooperation outlined in guidelines military leaders established for troops and the local populace.

"Those visionary leaders, between 1918 and 1923, ensured that the new chapter was framed by positive and mutual respect and cooperation, for the benefit of all," Phillips said.

Helen Patton, whose grandfather was a tank commander during the war, recalled stories her grandmother told about the

occupation.

"I remember having trouble sleeping one night, and my grandmother just kept me awake until I became drowsy with her incredibly beautiful memories of a place called Koblenz," she said.

Patton volunteered to donate a medal, to help the exhibit reach more people and remind them of how the American soldiers' efforts affected the German people. She said the exhibit's photos "can really inspire."

The occupation helped "avert or stop human disaster by providing food to an ailing population," said David Elmo, an official from the U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt, who spoke of American support to Germany during several challenging periods of the 20th century.

More than 33,000 American troops are currently stationed in Germany, many in Rheinland-Pfalz. More than 15 million Americans have lived in the country in the past 70 years, he said, calling it a sign of the closeness between the two countries.

The U.S. will continue to invest in European security, he said, urging stronger German defense spending — a measure Trump has repeatedly called for, but which many Germans oppose.

"We want to see a stronger Europe, a more prepared Europe and therefore a stronger trans-Atlantic alliance," Elmo said. Defense spending "is not a burden [but] an investment that pays off in both the short and the long-term... because security provides peace, stability, and we need it for economies to flourish."

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WAR/MILITARY



U.S. soldiers provide security during an independent, coordinated patrol outside Manbij, Syria, in August. U.S. forces conduct these patrols in coordination with Turkish military forces on the other side of the demarcation line.

Photos courtesy of the U.S. Army

Peril: Official says US troops must remain to avoid new war

FROM FRONT PAGE

home once the battle is won, and the latest military push to eject the group from its final pocket of territory recently got underway.

In September, however, the administration switched course, saying the troops will stay in Syria pending an overall settlement to the Syrian war and with a new mission: to act as a bulwark against Iran's expanding influence.

That decision puts U.S. troops in overall control, perhaps indefinitely, of an area comprising nearly a third of Syria, a vast expanse of mostly desert terrain roughly the size of Louisiana.

The Pentagon does not say how many troops are there. Officially, they number 503, but earlier this year, an official let slip that the true number may be closer to 4,000. Most are Special Operations forces, and their footprint is light. Their vehicles and convoys rumble by from time to time along the empty desert roads, but it is rare to see U.S. soldiers in towns and cities.

The new mission raises new questions about the role they will play and whether their presence will risk becoming a magnet for regional conflict and insurgency.

The area is surrounded by powers hostile both to the U.S. presence and the aspirations of the Kurds, who are governing the majority-Arab area in pursuit of a leftist ideology formulated by an imprisoned Turkish Kurdish leader. Signs that ISIS is starting to regroup and rumblings of discontent within the Arab community point to the threat of an insurgency.

Without the presence of U.S. troops, these dangers would almost certainly ignite a new war right away, said Ilham Ahmed, a senior official with the Self-Administration of North and East Syria, as the self-styled government of the area is called.

"They have to stay. If they leave and there isn't a solution for Syria, it will be catastrophic," he said.

But staying also heralds risk, and already the challenges are starting to mount.

A Turkish threat to invade the area last month forced the United States to scramble patrols along the border with Turkey, which has massed troops and tanks along the frontier. Turkey regards the main Kurdish militia, the YPG, which is affiliated with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party inside Turkey, as a terrorist organization and fears the consequences for its own security if the group consolidates power in Syria.

Syrian government troops and Iranian proxy fighters are to the south and west. They have threatened to take the area back by force in pursuit of President Bashar Assad's pledge to bring all of Syria under government control. The government and Iran have been cultivating ties with local tribes, and the U.S. announcement of its intent to counter the Iranian presence in Syria may, in response, further encourage such ties.

Calm starts to fray

Away from the front lines, the calm that followed the ejection of ISIS from Raqqa and the surrounding territory is starting to fray. A series of mysterious bombings and assassinations in some of the areas retaken from the militants up to three years ago has set nerves on edge. Most of the attacks are claimed by ISIS, and a U.S. military spokesman, Col. Sean Ryan, said there is no reason to believe ISIS is not responsible.

"We know they're regrouping in those areas," he said.

But there are widespread suspicions that any one of the regional powers opposed to the U.S. presence and the Kurds' pursuit of self-governance may be seeking to

destabilize the area, finding allies among disgruntled Arabs uncomfortable with the prospect of being governed long term by the Kurds.

The Kurdish forces have sought to include Arabs in their self-governance experiment but retain dominance over its structures at every level, Arabs complain.

This is a part of Syria where tribal loyalties often trump politics, and the tribes are being courted by all the regional players with an interest in ultimately controlling the area, according to Sheikh Humaidi al-Shammar, the head of the influential Shammar tribe.

At Shammar's outsize mansion, which rises improbably from the empty desert near the Iraqi border, dozens of tribal leaders gathered one recent Friday for his customary weekly divan, sweeping into his cavernous reception room dressed in gold-trimmed robes and flanked by pistol-wielding guards.

The guests ranged, Shammar confided, from sheikhs affiliated with the Assad regime and his ruling Baath Party to representatives of ISIS, the Free Syrian Army rebels and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces — a spectrum of those competing for control in northeastern Syria.

Shammar has allied his tribe with the United States and the Kurds, and he has contributed fighters from his small Sanadid militia to battles against ISIS. But, he said, he has many concerns — namely, that the U.S. talk of countering Iran will suck the region into a new conflict and that the area's Arabs will be cut out of any deal that is eventually reached with the Kurds.



A U.S. Army Special Forces soldier uses a Command Launch Unit for an FGM-148 Javelin to spot Islamic State targets in Ezzor province, Syria, on Oct. 11.

"Everything is uncertain. We are part of a global game now, and it is out of our hands," he said.

His son, Bandar, who leads the Shammar militia, said the tribe supports some form of new arrangement for the Kurds in Syria "because they are our brothers and they sacrificed a lot."

'Living together'

"The main concern of the Arab population is that one ethnicity, the Kurds, is going to build a state for Kurds and impose their authority on the others," he said. "The coalition created the Syrian Democratic Forces to be multi-ethnic, but really, people see it is not like this. It is a solo actor which authorizes everything and controls everything."

Kurdish leaders say they are working hard to convince the Arab community that their plan for governing will include it. Education sessions are being held in Arab areas to try to bring Arabs around to the views of Abdullah Ocalan, the jailed Turkish Kurdish leader who inspired the YPG's ideology, said Saleh Muslim, a senior official with the Democratic Union Party, the political wing of the YPG.

"We are very sincere about living together," he said. "It's a matter of time. Maybe we need three or four years to make it stable."

Whether the Kurds have three or four years is unclear.

SEE PERIL ON PAGE 6

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‘They (U.S. troops) have to stay. If they leave and there isn’t a solution for Syria, it will be catastrophic.’

Ilham Ahmed

Self-Administration of North and East Syria

WAR/MILITARY

Peril: Raqqa residents angry US, partners not helping to rebuild

FROM PAGE 5

U.S. officials hope the American presence will bring leverage in negotiations over an eventual settlement to end the Syrian war, with the aim of securing some form of autonomy for their Kurdish allies as well as rolling back Iranian influence.

But there is no such settlement in sight, and there may not be one. Assad has prevailed against the rebellion elsewhere in Syria and has shown no inclination to make concessions. The expectation among many residents, Kurds and Arabs alike, is that the government will eventually restore its authority over the area.

After Trump said the troops would soon be withdrawn, many here began planning for that eventuality, including the Kurds, who launched talks with Damascus for a direct, bilateral settlement. The talks went nowhere, and now the Americans are staying — but Kurdish officials say they are keeping open channels of communication in case Trump changes his mind again.

"Everything is very complicated, and no one knows which way to turn. We don't know who is against whom and who is with whom," said Amjad Othman, an official with the SDF.

All the challenges and complexities of northeastern Syria seemed to be concentrated in the small, strategic town of Manbij. Located beside the Euphrates River, it was liberated from ISIS by Kurdish forces over three years ago. Now, to the north lies territory controlled by Turkish troops and their Free Syrian Army allies, and to the south lies territory controlled by the Syrian government and its allies, Russia and Iran.

In the middle are the Americans. It is one of the few places where the U.S. military has a conspicuous presence. There are three small U.S. bases in and around the town, supporting an American effort to keep apart Turkey and the Kurdish-affiliated Manbij Military Council, according to officials with the council. So far, diplomacy has worked to tamp down the tensions, and the U.S. and Turkish militaries recently began conducting joint patrols along the front line.

But attacks, carried out by assassins riding motorcycles and planting roadside bombs, are occurring with increasing frequency behind the front lines. Local officials believe groups affiliated with the Syrian government and Iran are behind some of these, according to Mohammed Mustafa Ali, who goes by the name Abu Adil and is the head of the Manbij Military Council. "We are surrounded by enemies, and they all want to come here," he said.

Financial frustrations

Frustrations are building, meanwhile, with the acute lack of funding for reconstruction, impeding the effort to win hearts and minds in Arab non-Kurdish areas, Kurdish officials say. Earlier this year, Trump cut the \$200 million that had been earmarked for essential repairs to the worst damaged areas. Though that sum has been replaced by donations from

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, it is a fraction of the billions of dollars required.

It is in Raqqa, the biggest city in the part of Syria where U.S. troops are based, that the frustration is most keenly felt. The city was devastated by the U.S.-led airstrikes that accompanied the SDF's four-month offensive to drive out ISIS, and a year later, the city is still in ruins.

Signs of life are returning, with shops and markets reopening in some neighborhoods. About half the population has returned, squeezing into the least damaged buildings, sometimes living without walls and windows. Most roads have been cleared of piles of rubble that were left by the bombardments, but blocks on end are wrecked and uninhabitable. The water was restored in September, but there is still no electricity.

Without more financial support, there is a risk that Raqqa will "devolve into the same vulnerability ISIS found when it first arrived, a fractured city ripe for extremist takeover and exploitation," a report by the Pentagon's inspector general said last month, quoting a State Department official.

Anger on the streets

The anger on the streets is palpable. Some residents are openly hostile to foreign visitors, which is rare in other towns and cities freed from ISIS control in Syria and Iraq. Even those who support the presence of the U.S. military and the SDF say they are resentful that the United States and its partners in the anti-ISIS coalition that bombed the city aren't helping to rebuild. And many appear not to support their new rulers.

"We don't want the Americans. It's occupation," said one man, a tailor, who didn't want to give his name because he feared the consequences of speaking his mind. "I don't know why they had to use such a huge number of weapons and destroy the city. Yes, ISIS was here, but we paid the price. They have a responsibility."

He spoke wistfully of life under ISIS, when, he said, the streets were safe. His business was good because foreign fighters flocked to him to get themselves decked out in the Afghan-style outfits of baggy pants and tunics that were favored by ISIS. Now, the city is half empty and customers are few.

Everyone says the streets are not safe now. Recent months have seen an uptick in assassinations and kidnappings, mostly targeting members of the security forces or people who work with the local council. But some critics of the authorities have been gunned down, too, and at night there are abductions and robberies.

And there is graffiti, often appearing overnight, a sinister reminder that ISIS is trying to stage a comeback.

"Remaining in spite of you," said the writing scrawled in black paint on the collapsed wall of a destroyed building on one recent morning, a reference to the ISIS slogan, "Remaining and expanding."

The paint was fresh.



From top: Used clothes are sold at a street stand in Raqqa, Syria, where signs of life returned in some neighborhoods in October; Sheikh Humaidi al-Shammar, third from left, the leader of the influential Shammar tribe, greets a guest at his residence in Tel Aio, Syria; "Remaining in spite of you," referencing an Islamic State slogan, is freshly spray-painted on a wall in Raqqa.

PHOTOS BY ALICE MARTINS/
The Washington Post



MILITARY

Influence: Handing over port operation to China would impact US base

FROM FRONT PAGE

4.8 million barrels of oil transit the Bab el-Mandab straight adjacent to Djibouti.

Djibouti's proximity to terrorist havens in Yemen and Somalia also made it an ideal location for the U.S. military. Camp Lemonnier, a former French foreign legion base, became an expeditionary base for counterterrorism operations after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. The base, which shares a runway with Djibouti's only international airport, has grown significantly over the years.

The base houses thousands of military personnel to support operations in the region. The military reports killing approximately 254 al-Shabab militants through 32 airstrikes in Somalia this year so far. That is a significant increase over the approximately 150 Somali militants reportedly killed in the previous year. Djibouti is also adjacent to Yemen, where the U.S. has been supporting Saudi-led efforts against Houthi militants.

Major investments

In October, the military announced \$240 million worth of contracts for expansion of facilities that will include infrastructure to support the Air Force's largest cargo jets. This is just part of the \$1.4 billion plan for the base that the Pentagon announced in 2012. The Obama administration entered a 30-year lease for Camp Lemonnier in 2014 at a cost of \$63 million per year.

While the United States and other countries have military interests in Djibouti, China has made major investments into the country's infrastructure. This could help Djibouti be a node in China's massive "One Belt, One Road" project to connect markets across Asia, Africa and Europe.

Djibouti's external debt has increased significantly since 2014 and much of this is believed to be infrastructure loans from China. In 2017, China established a military base next to the Doralah Multipurpose Port, another shipping terminal in Djibouti that it funded.

While there have been other concerns with China in Djibouti, such as accusations that China used lasers against American pilots in Djibouti, American officials have recently expressed concern over a port that was once operated by an external company but has been taken over by the Djibouti government.

The Doralah Container Terminal opened in 2008 as a joint venture between DP World, an Emirati company, and the Djiboutian government. In February, the government canceled the agreement with DP World and in September it nationalized the port.

Djiboutian business executive Abdourahman Boreh was instrumental in making the deal to create the Doralah container terminal. The Djiboutian government claims Boreh was bribed by DP World to facilitate an unfair contract.

He found out that there were imbalances in the contract to the point that we got convinced that the contract was signed in bad faith," Djiboutian ambassador to the U.S. Mohamed Siad Douale told The Post. Douale claims that DP World was diverting shipping traffic away from Djibouti, and he provided internal documentation showing that shipping traffic has increased by 33 percent following the termination of the contract in February.

In 2016, Boreh was cleared of wrongdoing by an international arbitration court in Britain. Boreh declined to speak to The Post about his involvement in the dispute over the Doralah Container Terminal.

In September, the High Court in London issued an injunction against Djibouti in the dispute with DP World, but the govern-



JOE RULLO/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Servicemembers, emergency responders and base contractors at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, take part in a base-wide Operational Risk Assessment exercise Dec. 6. The base's access to a single container port could be threatened if China takes over operation of the port.

ment ignored this ruling.

"We did not recognize the arbitrator award to DP World because it was just unfair," Douale said. He dismissed the notion that Djibouti would hand over control of the Doralah Container Terminal to China.

"Djibouti is a sovereign state and Djibouti is in control of its ports," Douale said. "Our sole intention is to build an economic future for our population."

Some American officials are not convinced by such assurances.

"The Djiboutians are up to their neck in debt to China," Reuben Brigety, former U.S. ambassador to the African Union told The Post. Brigety said he expects this leverage to be used to force the Djiboutian government to hand control of the port to a Chinese company within the next six months.

"The Chinese will eventually use that enormously important strategic position to crowd out

U.S. military operations," Brigety said.

Port's operation

Handing over the operation of the port would not only allow China to constrain operations at Camp Lemonnier, Brigety explained, it would also have economic consequences in the region. The ports in Djibouti are a major transit point for goods shipped to Ethiopia, Africa's second most populous country.

"The United States is asleep at the switch while all of this is happening," Brigety said in November, before the Trump administration announced the new Africa strategy.

In November, Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., and Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., sent a joint letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis voicing concern about the Doralah Container Terminal.

"China's control of Doralah could allow it to impede U.S. military operations in the Horn of Africa," the letter stated.

Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Rep. Mac Thornberry, R-Texas, has also expressed concern.

"Anyone who believes that China is only concerned about the Indo-Pacific region is ignoring the clear evidence in Africa and elsewhere," Thornberry said in a statement following a March tour of East Africa, which included a stop in Djibouti.

"It's hard to overstate how concerned Chairman Thornberry is about this issue," Claude Chafin, communications director for the House Armed Services Committee, told The Post.

The first pillar of the Trump administration's new Africa strategy is advancing trade and commercial ties between the United States and Africa. While investment in Djibouti could increase American influence, China certainly has a head start.

Brigety already sees how the American interests could be impacted in Djibouti.

"It's like a game a chess in which you can see checkmate five moves out and if the United States does not take some action to reverse it in short order our interests will absolutely be harmed, quite seriously."

Reuben Brigety

former U.S. ambassador to the African Union

“It's like a game a chess in which you can see checkmate five moves out and if the United States does not take some action to reverse it in short order our interests will absolutely be harmed, quite seriously.”

Trump will review case of veteran who faces murder charge

By DAN LAMOTHE
The Washington Post

President Donald Trump tweeted Sunday that he will review the case of a former Special Forces officer and Afghanistan war veteran who was notified last week that he will face a murder charge in the death of a detainee suspected of being a Taliban bombmaker.

Former Army Maj. Mathew L. Golsteyn was notified Thursday by the

Army that he will face one charge of murder, his attorney and the Army said. The military has been investigating him since 2011, when Army officials said he confessed during a polygraph test as part of a CIA job interview to killing the suspected bombmaker.

"At the request of many, I will be reviewing the case of a 'U.S. Military hero,' Major Matt Golsteyn, who is charged with murder," Trump tweeted. "He could face the death penalty

from our own government after he admitted to killing a Terrorist bomb maker while overseas."

Trump's statement could complicate the military's prosecution of Golsteyn. Trump, as commander in chief, is expected in the military justice system to not make statements that could influence open cases. Doing so is considered unlawful command influence and can result in cases being thrown out.

The Associated Press reported that

in a statement Sunday, Army Col. Rob Manning, a Pentagon spokesman, said that "the allegations against Major Matt Golsteyn are a law enforcement matter. The Department of Defense will respect the integrity of this process and provide updates when appropriate."

Golsteyn's attorney, Phillip Stackhouse, has disputed that Golsteyn's statement to the CIA was characterized accurately by the Army.



Golsteyn

MILITARY

S. Korea, US fail to reach deal on cost-sharing

By KIM GAMEL
Stars and Stripes

SEOUL, South Korea — With an end-of-year deadline fast approaching, the United States and South Korea failed to reach a new military cost-sharing agreement in talks last week as Washington demanded that its ally pay "significantly more," officials said last Friday.

The dispute puts the longtime alliance under pressure at a critical time, as they try to project solidarity in diplomatic efforts to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons.

Senior diplomats from both sides held three days of talks ending Thursday in Seoul to try to hammer out a new five-year deal, but negotiators were unable to agree on U.S. demands that South Korea increase its share of the burden for maintaining some 28,500 U.S. troops on the divided peninsula.

"The U.S. government's position is that [South Korea] should more equitably share in the financial burden," U.S. Embassy spokesman Grant Guthrie said Friday. "Our administration has been clear in the expectation that our allies, including [South Korea], contribute more given the immense costs incurred by the United States.

"Our position is [South Korea] must con-

tribute significantly more than it's currently offering to achieve a fair burden-sharing arrangement in which [it] bears a greater burden for its own defense," he added, without giving a specific figure.

'The US government's position is that [South Korea] should more equitably share in the financial burden.'

Grant Guthrie
US Embassy
spokesman

round of talks might be held this month. A South Korean official ruled out that possibility.

"The U.S. government stands by our [South Korea] ally, including through the shared obligations under our mutual de-

fense treaty," Guthrie said. "The U.S. commitment to the security of [South Korea] and its people is ironclad."

Brinkmanship is common in the burden-sharing talks, which occur every five years. In 2013, the allies missed the Dec. 31 deadline but managed to reach a deal a few weeks later, with South Korea agreeing to increase its contribution by 5.8 percent.

But Trump has raised the stakes by making efforts to force allies to pay more as a key part of his presidential platform.

Seoul insists it already pays a fair share at some \$830 million per year, or nearly half the total cost of stationing the troops in the South, which remains technically at war with the North since their 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

South Korea also separately footed most of the nearly \$11 billion bill for the expansion of the Camp Humphreys Army garrison as part of a long-delayed plan to relocate most U.S. forces south of Seoul. Trump visited the base with South Korean President Moon Jae-in last year.

The Special Measures Agreement largely covers the salaries of at least 9,000 South Korean employees who work on U.S. bases, as well as local services and construction. U.S. Forces Korea, the main command,

notified the Korean Employees Union and the labor ministry on Nov. 7 that local staff will have to be furloughed in the spring if no agreement is reached.

USFK declined to speculate on potential outcomes, citing ongoing consultations, but said it would seek a swift conclusion to mitigate a possible lapse in South Korean contributions.

It promised to ensure South Korean employees "have adequate time to prepare" for the possibility of unpaid leave.

"We value our Korean national workforce and their contribution to the Alliance," the spokesperson's office said in a statement.

Operations are expected to continue in the meantime, as reserve funds are available, officials have said.

South Korean government officials said the two sides differed over a contract period and some other contentious issues, in addition to Seoul's financial contributions.

It's unlikely that another round of formal talks will be held this month, but the two sides plan to continue communications through other channels, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the details.

Stars and Stripes reporter Yoo Kyong Chang contributed to this report.
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Iwakuni Marines honor lost aircrew with service, flyover

By JAMES BOLINGER
Stars and Stripes

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION IWAKUNI, Japan — A single KC-130J flew slowly past Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni Friday in remembrance of five Marines who lost their lives after their aerial refueler collided in midair with an F/A-18 Hornet on Dec. 6 off southern Japan.

Friends and family of the fallen

Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152 Marines also joined III Marine Expeditionary Force leadership for a private memorial that day in the unit's hangar.

The crewmembers aboard the plane were Lt. Col. Kevin Herrmann, 38, of Fredericksburg, Va.; Maj. James Brophy, 36, of Staatsburg, N.Y.; Staff Sgt. Maximo Flores, 27, of Surprise, Ariz.; Cpl. Carter Ross, 21, of Hender-

sonville, Tenn.; and Cpl. Daniel Baker, 21, of Tremont, Ill.

The remains of the crew and wreckage of the aircraft have not been found despite an exhaustive multinational search that involved Japanese, American and Australian aircraft and ships. The five-day effort covered more than 35,000 square nautical miles before it was called off Tuesday at 6 a.m.

Capt. Jahmar Resilard, 28,

a Hornet pilot, also died in the crash. A memorial service featuring a missing-man formation flyover was held Wednesday at MCAS Iwakuni and attended by his family and friends from Marine All-Weather Attack Squadron 242.

The collision's only survivor is Resilard's fellow Hornet pilot, who has not been identified. He was released from the hospital a few days after being rescued by the Japan

Maritime Self-Defense Force on the morning of the crash.

The cause of the collision is still unknown. Both aircraft were conducting regularly scheduled training that included aerial refueling operations, according to the Marines and Japanese Defense Ministry.

Marine officials are still investigating the incident.

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Volunteers honor the fallen with wreaths

From staff and wire reports

The Wreaths Across America program continued to live up to its name this year, as volunteers fanned out in cemeteries from coast to coast on Saturday to place memorial wreaths at the graves of those who served their nation in the military.

The program even expanded its presence overseas this year, as more than 9,000 wreaths were placed last week at Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial in Colleville-sur-Mer, France, above the D-Day beaches.

On Saturday, President Donald Trump visited Arlington National Cemetery, where more than a quarter-million wreaths were placed.

Trump listened to a tour guide



KEN-YON HANCO/Stars and Stripes

A Marine Corps veteran carries a wreath to be placed on a grave at Antietam National Cemetery in Sharpsburg, Md., for Wreaths Across America on Saturday.

To view a photo gallery of the events, go to:
stripes.com/go/wreaths

as they walked through the rows of white tombstones and told reporters that he supported a plan to expand the cemetery so it

could continue to hold burials for decades to come.

At Antietam National Cemetery in Sharpsburg, Md., close to 1,000 volunteers braved the rain and placed more than 3,100 wreaths during an event organized by the Leatherneck Nation Motorcycle Club.



MEREDITH THIBETTE/Stars and Stripes

Volunteers placed wreaths at the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home National Cemetery in Washington on Saturday.

"We want to honor everyone," said Ronald Mumma, a member of Leatherneck Nation and a U.S. Marine Corps veteran. "I don't have 4,776 wreaths today (the number of graves at Antietam), but that is the goal."

This year, Wreaths Across America shipped 1.75 mil-

lion wreaths to 1,640 locations across the U.S., according to the Pentagon.

The Arlington ceremonies, in their 27th year, capped a 740-mile journey by a convoy of trucks bearing the balsam tributes from Columbia Falls, Maine, where they are made.

NATION

Report: 2016 Calif. wildfire most expensive

By BRIAN MELLEY
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — When a wildfire burned across Big Sur two years ago and threatened hundreds of homes scattered on the scenic hills, thousands of firefighters responded with overwhelming force, attacking flames from the air and ground.

In the first week, the blaze destroyed 57 homes and killed a bulldozer operator, then moved into remote wilderness in the Los Padres National Forest. Yet for nearly three more months the attack barely let up.

The Soberanes Fire burned its way into the record books, costing \$262 million as the most expensive wildland firefight in U.S. history in what a new report calls an "extreme example of excessive, unaccountable, budget-busting suppression spending."

The report by Firefighters United for Safety, Ethics, and Ecology criticizes fire managers for not adapting their approach to the changing nature of the blaze. The nonprofit group, which gets funding from the Leonard DiCaprio Foundation and other environmental organizations, advocates ending "warfare on wildfires" by ecologically managing them.

The report suggests the Forest Service response was the result of a "use it or lose it" attitude to spend its entire budget, which had been boosted by \$700 million because of a destructive 2015 fire season. The agency managed to spend nearly all its 2016 money in a less-active fire season on about half the amount of land that burned the year before.

"They just kept going crazy on it," report author Timothy Ingalsbee said. "It wasn't demand-driven. It was supply-driven. They had all this extra money Congress had given them, and they had to justify that."

Forest Service officials would not comment directly on the report. After asking The Associated Press to provide written questions, the agency declined to answer them and issued a short statement saying it was committed to reducing costs in similarly large fires.

"Protection of people first and

then resources are our primary considerations," the statement said. "Every fire is evaluated to determine the appropriate strategy. We continually look for opportunities to improve outcomes and accountability and to find more cost-efficient and effective methods of managing wildfires."

In addition to burning 206 square miles, the smoky fire closed signature parks in the area and put a damper on tourism in Big Sur during the peak season of its only industry. Monterey County estimated a 40 percent loss in revenue for the summer season in the area.

An internal Forest Service review produced last year and obtained by the AP reached some of the same conclusions as Ingalsbee.

For example, the department's review found that from Aug. 9 to Sept. 29, 2016, the number of threatened structures remained at 400 even as the fire grew by more than 90 square miles, which indicated the risk to property had abated as the flames burned into the wilderness. During that period, firefighting costs grew by \$140 million.

The review found forest managers didn't think they could deviate from the "overwhelming force concept" aimed at suppression. It also said the agency's protocol for managing long-term wildfires "does not sufficiently evaluate and adjust to changing risk."

One challenge fire commanders faced was an outdated forest management plan for Los Padres that called for full suppression of all wildfires, Ingalsbee said.

Mike Warren, a retired National Park Service firefighter who reviewed the report, questioned the wisdom of suppressing fires in remote wilderness where flames can help eliminate brush and other flammable vegetation that could fuel a later wildfire.

When Warren was fire management officer at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, they would let blazes burn in the wilderness if they were confident the fire would stay in the park.

The challenge in a place like the tourist-dependent Big Sur area is pressure from politicians,

homeowners, businesses, loggers and ranchers to control the fire, Warren said.

"When is enough enough?" he said. "When do you back off, say, 'This is it. We're just going to let it do its thing.' That takes some real political will."

The Forest Service's internal review inspired Ingalsbee to file public records requests for other documents that led to his report.

Among his findings:

■ About a fifth of the area burned was from fires set to clear brush and vegetation between outer perimeters and the active fire. One of these blazes jumped fire lines. These burn-out operations created additional smoke and cost an estimated \$50 million.

■ A nearly \$39 million air campaign, including large air tankers that cost \$5,720 per hour, was largely ineffective. Retardant is effective at slowing flames only where ground crews can remove vegetation to create containment lines. But drops were done deep in steep, rugged wilderness where it was too dangerous to send crews, and even where flames never reached.

■ Bulldozers, which cost \$1,700 per hour, tore up wilderness, creating what Ingalsbee called



DAVID ROYAL, THE MONTEREY (CALIF.) COUNTY HERALD/AP

A fire-attack helicopter makes a retardant drop during a firing operation on the ridge between Mount Manuel and the Coast Ridge Road while fighting the Soberanes Fire on Aug. 13, 2016, near the village of Big Sur, Calif.

"ghost roads" that will remain for years. The Forest Service spent an estimated \$1 million a day for weeks repairing damage done by dozers.

The report concluded that once the blaze that broke out July 22, 2016, entered the wilderness,

there was little chance of stopping it before fall rains fell.

Chad Hanson, an expert on fire and director of the John Muir Project, a nonprofit environmental group, said the cost was stunning, but the approach to fire was business as usual.

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Report: Federal Air Marshal Service to reduce surveillance

Associated Press

BOSTON — The Federal Air Marshal Service says it's curtailing a domestic surveillance program that's been accused of spying on thousands of unwitting passengers who are not suspected of a crime or appear on a terror watch list.

The agency's new director, David Kohl, tells the Boston Globe that air marshals are "no longer capturing" any "routine passenger behaviors on a plane that would be seen as normal

behavior."

The changes follow a series of reports by the newspaper that found thousands of ordinary citizens had been swept up in "The Quiet Skies" program and watched by armed, undercover agents through airports and on flights.

Agency officials say marshals no longer document travelers' minor movements and behavior, such as whether they use the restroom during a flight or fidget in the airport.

NATION

Ruling on 'Obamacare' poses new GOP problems

BY RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A federal judge's ruling that Barack Obama's health law is unconstitutional has landed like a stink bomb among Republicans, who've seen the politics of health care flip as Americans increasingly value the overhaul's core parts, including protections for pre-existing medical conditions and Medicaid for more low-income people.

While the decision by the Republican-appointed judge in Texas was sweeping, it has little immediate practical impact because the Affordable Care Act remains in place while the legal battle continues, possibly to the Supreme Court.

HealthCare.gov, the government's website for signing up, was taking applications Saturday, the deadline in most states for enrolling for coverage next year, and those benefits will take effect as scheduled Jan. 1. Medicaid expansion will proceed in Virginia, one of the latest state to accept that option. Employers will still be required to cover the young adult children of workers, and Medicare recipients will still get discounted prescription drugs.

But Republicans, still stinging from their loss of the House in the midterm elections, are facing a fresh political quandary after U.S. District Judge Reed O'Connor said the entire 2010 health law was invalid.

"Obamacare" is a broken law (but) I am committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure America's health care system works for all Americans. ♪

Rep. Kevin McCarthy
R-Calif.

Warnings about the Texas lawsuit were part of the political narrative behind Democrats' electoral gains. Health care was the top issue for about one-fourth of voters in the November election, ahead of immigration and jobs and the economy, according to VoteCast, a nationwide survey for The Associated Press. Those most concerned with health care supported Democrats overwhelmingly.

In his ruling, O'Connor reasoned that the body of the law could not be surgically separated from its now-meaningless requirement for people to have health insurance.

"On the assumption that the Supreme Court upholds, we will get great, great health care for our people," President Donald Trump told reporters during a visit Saturday to Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. "We'll have to sit down with the Democrats to do it, but I'm sure they want to do it also."

Economist Gail Wilensky, who oversaw the Medicare program for President George

H.W. Bush, said the state attorneys general from GOP strongholds who filed the lawsuit really weren't very considerate of their fellow Republicans.

"The fact that they could cause their fellow Republicans harm did not seem to bother them," said Wilensky, a critic of Obama's signature domestic achievement. "The people who raised it are a bunch of guys who don't have serious election issues, mostly from states where saber-rattling against the ACA is fine," she added. "How many elections do you have to get battered before you find another issue?"

Douglas Holtz-Eakin, top policy adviser to Republican John McCain's 2008 presidential campaign, said he was struck by the relative silence from top Republicans after the ruling was issued.

A prominent example: "The House was not party to this suit, and we are reviewing the ruling and its impact," said AshLee Strong, spokeswoman for House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis.

Republicans are "going to have to figure out what to do," Holtz-Eakin said. "If it's invalidated by the courts, it's not. ... We're going to do it our way." They're going to have to get together with the Democrats in the House.

The GOP's failed effort last year to repeal the law showed there's no consensus within the party itself.

Trump tweeted Friday night that "Congress must pass a STRONG law that provides GREAT health care and protects pre-existing conditions."

"Get it done!" he told Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., who is expected to be speaker in January. But Trump had no plan of his own to offer in the 2017 "repeal and replace" debate.

Two top House Republicans issued diverging statements.

Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, of California, said "Obamacare is a broken law," but he added, "I am committed to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make sure America's health care system works for all Americans."

The third-ranking GOP leader, Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise, praised the judge's ruling and made no mention of working with Democrats, whom he accused of "running a fear-mongering campaign" to win control of the House last month.

Governor urges hate crime law for Indiana

BY BRIAN SLODYSKO
AND TOM DAVIES
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb is pushing for Indiana to join the 45 states that have hate crime laws.

But as Indiana's annual legislative session approaches, some warn that such a proposal could spark a bitter cultural debate and draw unwanted attention to the deeply conservative state.

They cite a 2015 religious objections law that was panned by critics as a sanctioning of discrimination against the LGBT community.

Holcomb told The Associated Press on Friday that passing a hate crimes law is "not only the right thing to do, it's long overdue." Many business leaders agree, saying it's important for the state's reputation.

Many social conservatives disagree, including members of the Republican-dominated Legislature. Lawmakers have shut down recent attempts to pass a hate crime law.



CHUCK BURTON/AP

Above: Republican congressional candidate Mark Harris speaks to the media during a news conference in Matthews, N.C., on Nov. 7. **Left:** Democratic congressional candidate Dan McCready leans against wallboard as he pauses during a Habitat For Humanity building event in September in Charlotte, N.C.

Worries about ballot security overshadow disputed NC race

BY MICHAEL BIESECKER
AND EMERY P. DALESIO
Associated Press

BLADENBORO, N.C. — Six months ago, election officials in rural North Carolina's Bladen County resolved to tighten security at their headquarters and protect the ballots stored there by installing an alarm and video cameras and securing an unlocked door that leads to another government office.

The fixes never got done before Election Day. The then-chairman of the county commissioners, who control the purse strings, did not see the need.

Now, Bladen County is at the center of a disputed congressional election rife with suspicions of fraud, including the possibility that absentee ballots were altered or discarded.

While no evidence has surfaced to suggest ballots were stolen or tampered with inside the building, warnings about the potential for political chicanery in Bladen County were raised years before the burgeoning scandal dragged this patch of eastern North Caroli-

na's pine barrens into the spotlight.

Marshall Tutor, who was lead investigator for the state board of elections 15 years, said he frequently traveled to Bladen County over the years to probe accusations of wrongdoing.

He said residents were often hesitant to talk to outsiders about possible voting fraud, much less testify.

"Looking back during my time at the board of elections, this mess in Bladen County, just from what I've seen and what I know, is the worst I've encountered in the entire state," said Tutor, who retired in March.

With the congressional race now under investigation by state authorities, the state has refused to certify the results of the Nov. 6 vote in the 9th District, where Republican Mark Harris leads Democrat Dan McCready by 905 votes. Both parties concede a do-over

election might be needed.

Foremost among the cast of characters in the case is Leslie McCrae Dowless Jr., 62, a local campaign operative and convicted felon who has been named a "person of interest" by the state Board of Elections. Authorities want to know whether he and others working on Harris' behalf ran an illegal operation in which they collected large numbers of absentee ballots because of the potential for mischief, it is against the law in North Carolina for anyone other than a voter or immediate family member to handle someone's absentee ballot before it is sealed and mailed.

In an interview with Charlotte station WBTV on Friday, Harris admitted making the decision to hire Dowless, who he said had come recommended by people in Bladen County. But the GOP candidate denied knowing about any illegal "ballot harvesting" tactics.

Located about an hour's drive from the coast, Bladen is among North Carolina's least densely populated counties, with about 35,000 people. Good jobs can be hard to come by.



Holcomb



Dowless

NATION



REBECCA GIBIAN/AP

NPR's Nina Totenberg, left, and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg stand onstage at the New York Academy of Medicine after doing a question and answer session as part of the Museum of the City of New York's David Berg Distinguished Speakers Series on Saturday.

'Notorious RBG' draws sold-out audience in NY

BY REBECCA GIBIAN
Associated Press

NEW YORK — U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is an unlikely national rock star. But "The Notorious RBG" is now the subject of a second film about her this year — in theaters on Christmas Day.

On Saturday evening, the 85-year-old Brooklyn native appeared in person, expressing love for her hometown of New York to a sold-out audience at the event organized by the Museum of the City of New York with WNET-TV. NPR legal correspondent Nina Totenberg led the question-and-answer session about Ginsburg's quarter century on the Supreme Court, and about her life.

Totenberg asked Ginsburg what she thought of a marital sex scene in the new biopic, "On the Basis of Sex," with Felicity Jones playing the young Ginsburg. It explores how her early legal battles changed the world for women.

"What I thought of it is that Marty would have loved it," the

justice deadpanned with a laugh, referring to her late husband.

The evening sponsored by a museum dedicated to New York and its history turned into Ginsburg's love letter to the city she said she misses for its "tremendous variety" — in everything from food and ethnicity to music.

What she misses most, Ginsburg said, is going to the Metropolitan Opera, whose stars she has befriended and invites annually to sing at a private Supreme Court gathering.

"There's no rival in the world" to the Met, she said.

Sitting on the stage, Ginsburg exuded the kind of vitality that has kept her going to the gym, lifting weights — a routine she was forced to interrupt last month when she fractured three ribs in a fall. She was back to work within days.

"And yesterday was my first day doing my whole workout routine," the octogenarian, high-energy New Yorker said — nonchalantly.

Idaho test reactor key in US nuclear power strategy

BY KEITH RIDLER
Associated Press

IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY, Idaho — A nuclear test reactor that can melt uranium fuel rods in seconds is running again after a nearly quarter-century shutdown as U.S. officials try to revamp a fading nuclear power industry with safer fuel designs and a new generation of power plants.

The reactor at the U.S. Energy Department's Idaho National Laboratory has performed 10 tests on nuclear fuel since late last year.

"If we're going to have nuclear power in this country 20 or 30 years from now, it's going to be because of this reactor," said J.R. Biggs, standing in front of the Transient Test Reactor he manages that in short bursts can produce enough energy to power 14 million homes.

The reactor was used to run 6,604 tests from 1959 to 1994, when it was put on standby as the United States started turning away from nuclear power amid safety concerns.

Restarting it is part of a strategy to reduce U.S. greenhouse gas emissions by generating carbon-free electricity with nuclear power initiated under the Obama administration and continuing under the Trump administration.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, 98 nuclear reactors at 59 power plants produce about 20 percent of the nation's energy. Most of the reactors are decades old, and many are having a tough time competing economically with other forms of energy production, particularly cheaper gas-fired power plants.

U.S. officials hope to improve nuclear power's prospects. They face two main challenges: making the plants economically competitive and changing public perception about some that nuclear power is unsafe.

Biggs said Japan's Fukushima nuclear disaster, caused by a 2011



KEITH RIDLER/AP

J.R. Biggs stands in front of the Transient Test Reactor he manages about 50 miles west of Idaho Falls, Idaho, on Nov. 29.

'If we're going to have nuclear power in this country 20 or 30 years from now, it's going to be because of this reactor.'

J.R. Biggs
Transient Test Reactor manager

earthquake and tsunami, was a primary reason U.S. officials restarted the test reactor in Idaho. The cores of three reactors at the Japan plant suffered meltdowns after cooling systems failed.

But what if, researchers say, nuclear plants produced energy with accident-tolerant fuels in reactors designed to safely shut themselves down in an emergency? That's where the Idaho lab's test reactor comes in.

Dan Wachs, who directs the lab's fuel safety research program, said only three other reactors with fuel testing abilities exist — in France, Japan and Kazakhstan. He said none can perform the range of experiments that can be done at the Idaho lab's Transient Test Reactor, also called TREAT.

"The world is suffering from a very acute shortage of testing that TREAT fills," he said.

At the Idaho test reactor, pencil-sized pieces of fuel rods supplied by commercial manufacturers are inserted into the reactor that can generate short, 20-gigawatt bursts of energy. Workers perform tests remotely from about half a mile away.

The strategy is to test the fuels under accident conditions, including controlled and contained meltdowns, to eventually create safer fuels.

Wachs and his team of about 15 scientists get the results and consult with both the fuel manufacturer and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which licenses nuclear fuel.

Man who demolished landmark house ordered to build replica

Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — A man who illegally demolished a San Francisco house designed by modernist architect Richard Neutra was ordered last week to rebuild it exactly as it was.

The city Planning Commission also ordered Ross Johnston to add a sidewalk plaque telling the entire saga of the house's origins in the 1930s, its demolition and replication.

It's not known whether he will follow through. A call and email message seeking comments from Johnston's lawyer has not been

returned.

Johnston had received permission only to remodel the two-story house he bought for \$1.7 million in 2017 with a design that would have largely kept the first floor intact, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

Instead, everything but the garage door and frame of the house was knocked down.

Johnston later applied for a retroactive demolition permit and asked to build a new three-story house that would expand the size from 1,300 to nearly 4,000 square feet.

Johnston said he wanted to move his family of six into the larger home.

"I have been stuck in limbo for over a year," he told the seven-member commission.

His attorney Justin Zucker argued that the house's historic value had been erased over time because of a 1968 fire and a series of remodels in the 1980s and 1990s.

The house in Twin Peaks, known among architecture buffs as the Largest House, was the Austrian architect's first project in San Francisco.



SANTIAGO MEJIA, SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE/AP

A demolished house, right, is seen Friday in San Francisco. A man who illegally demolished the house designed by the modernist architect Richard Neutra was ordered to rebuild it exactly as it was.

Planning Commissioner Kathrin Moore said she is confident that a replica could be "executed

beautifully in a way that would be consistent with the home's original expression."



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WORLD

N. Koreans mark 7 years since Kim Jong II's death

By ERIC TALMADGE
Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea — North Koreans are marking the seventh anniversary of the death of leader Kim Jong II with visits to statues and vows of loyalty to his son and successor, Kim Jong Un.

As snow fell Sunday, tens of thousands of people offered flowers and paid respects to the late leader at Mansu Hill in central Pyongyang, the location of huge bronze statues of the "Dear Leader" and national founder Kim Il Sung.

The anniversary observations were expected to continue through Monday across the country.

The death of Kim Jong II on Dec. 17, 2011, thrust his son into power when he was still in his late 20s and a virtually unknown figure outside of the North.

Despite many predictions from outside experts that he wouldn't be up to the task, Kim Jong Un has consolidated his power, bolstered the country's economy in the face of intense international sanctions and attained a goal his father and grandfather could only dream of — he is the first North Korean leader to possess an arsenal of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles capable of reaching the United States.



Then North Korean leader Kim Jong II claps from the balcony as soldiers salute him during a military parade in Pyongyang, North Korea on Aug. 25, 2002.

With attention focused on the anniversary, there was little mention in the state media of the issues that have gotten the most attention elsewhere, including a flurry of speculation in South Korea that Kim might visit Seoul by the end of the year.

But the North's official Korean Central News Agency ran a lengthy commentary late Sunday that slammed the United States for "slander" and "sheer malice" against the country and for dragging its feet on efforts to improve relations after Kim's summit with President Donald Trump in Singapore in June.

The commentary deliberately focused its criticism on the State Department and administration

officials, not at Trump, suggesting that Pyongyang remains open to another summit.

Virtually all homes and public offices in North Korea feature portraits of the elder Kims, who are also memorialized in countless statues, mosaics and cenotaphs around the country. North Korean adults wear pins over their hearts bearing the likenesses of Kim Il Sung or Kim Jong II, or both.

The North has yet to come out with a Kim Jong Un pin or to order his image join the others on every wall, though Kim and his wife, Ri Sol Ju, have been referred to with increasingly lofty titles — "chairman" for Kim and "respected first lady" for Ri. A special portrait of the young chairman was unveiled recently at a ceremony to welcome the visit of Cuba's president, but none have appeared in public since. And unlike his father and grandfather, Kim's Jan. 8 birthday has yet to be declared a national holiday or even marked on calendars.

None of that should be assumed to be a sign of weakness, however.

Kim is generally afforded the same reverential treatment by the state media, and for maintaining a respectful step behind his predecessors, he is credited with showing humility and confidence.



JEAN-FRANÇOIS BADIAS/AP

People place candles to pay respects Saturday to the victims of an attack at the Christmas market that killed four people and wounded at least 13, in Strasbourg, eastern France.

Strasbourg remembers victims of the Christmas market attack

Associated Press

PARIS — Residents of the eastern French city of Strasbourg filled a city square Sunday for a memorial to the four people shot dead and the dozen wounded by a gunman at their famous Christmas market.

The hourlong ceremony took place in Kleber Square by the city's Christmas market, near where the gunman opened fire on Tuesday evening.

According to the local newspaper DNA, more than 1,000 people attended the memorial, which ended with a minute of applause and a rendition of France's national anthem, "La Marseillaise." Strasbourg Mayor Roland Ries praised the city's resilience in the face of hardship.

"The presence on Saturday

of an extremely large crowd in the Christmas market was an illustration of our commitment to these values on which our living together is based, which we will continue to defend against all those who want to attack it," Ries said.

After the attack, French authorities launched a massive manhunt that ended Thursday night when the main suspect, Strasbourg-born Cherif Chekatt, 29, was killed in a shootout with police in the city neighborhood where he grew up.

French authorities are still investigating the Strasbourg Christmas market attack. Chekatt's parents and two of his brothers, who had been held by police for questioning for several days, were released on Saturday.

Nations at climate talks back universal emissions rules

By FRANK JORDANS
Associated Press

KATOWICE, Poland — Nearly 200 countries at the U.N. climate talks have agreed upon universal, transparent rules on how nations can cut greenhouse gas emissions and curb global warming, putting the principles of the 2015 Paris climate accord into action.

But to the frustration of environmentalists and a group of countries who were urging more ambitious climate goals, negotiators on Saturday delayed decisions on two other climate issues until next year in an effort to get a deal on them.

"We need this package, you have made a thousand little steps forward together," said Michał Kurtyka, a senior Polish official chairing the talks.

He said while each individual country would likely find some pain in the agreement, it didn't like, efforts had been made to balance the interests of all parties.

"We will all have to give in order to gain," he said.

The talks in Poland took place against a backdrop of growing concern among scientists that global warming on Earth is proceeding faster than governments



Heads of the delegations react at the end of the final session of the COP24 summit on climate change in Katowice, Poland, on Saturday.

are responding to it. Last month, a study found that global warming will worsen disasters such as the deadly California wildfires and the powerful hurricanes that have hit the United States this year.

And a recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, or IPCC, concluded that while it's possible to cap global warming at 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century compared to pre-industrial times, this would require a dramatic overhaul of the global economy,

including a shift away from fossil fuels.

Alarmed by efforts to include this in the final text of the meeting, the oil-exporting nations of the U.S., Russia, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait blocked an endorsement of the IPCC report midway through this month's talks in the Polish city of Katowice. That prompted uproar from vulnerable countries like small island nations and environmental groups.

Last-minute snags forced negotiators in Katowice to go into extra time after Friday's sched-

uled end of the conference had passed without a deal.

One major sticking point was how to create a functioning market in carbon credits. Economists believe that an international trading system could be an effective way to drive down greenhouse gas emissions and raise large amounts of money for measures to curb global warming.

But Brazil wanted to keep the piles of carbon credits it had amassed under an old system that developed countries say wasn't credible or transparent.

Among those that pushed back hardest was the United States, despite President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris climate accord and his promotion of coal as a source of energy.

Among the key achievements in Katowice was an agreement on how countries should report their greenhouse gas emissions and the efforts they're taking to reduce them.

In the end, a decision on the mechanics of an emissions trading system was postponed to next year's meeting. Countries also agreed to consider the issue of raising ambitions at a U.N. summit in New York next September.

42 people injured in restaurant explosion

TOKYO — More than 40 people were injured in an explosion Sunday night at a Japanese restaurant in northern Japan, police said.

The explosion occurred in Sapporo, the capital city of Japan's northern main island of Hokkaido, and caused nearby apartment buildings and houses to shake.

Police said 42 people were injured, most of them mildly, though one was in serious condition. They were rushed to nearby hospitals for treatment.

The cause of the explosion, which occurred at a two-story restaurant in Sapporo's Toyohira district, is under investigation, police said, adding that they had no further details.

TV footage from Japanese public broadcaster NHK showed the restaurant in flames, with debris scattered on the ground.

The footage later showed gray smoke billowing from the restaurant as dozens of firefighters poured water onto the building, which was charred and nearly collapsing. Windows on an apartment building next door were broken, and cars parked outside were partially covered with debris that had fallen on them.

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OPINION

Right-now problems bring us together

By DAVID VON DREHLE

The Washington Post

DAWN was a thin, brittle crust on the edge of a recent morning and the thermometer read a stingy 20 degrees when a friend of mine donned a red apron and began ringing a handbell next to a Salvation Army kettle. Millions do this every year, and like most of them, my friend is not a member of the Army, nor does he require any of the services the venerable charity provides to people around the world. It was a chance to be of service, and he seized it.

Ho hum, you might say. And that's precisely the point: Preced this scene because it is ordinary. This land is a hive of helpers. You see them everywhere this time of year, at their red kettles and food banks, their coat drives and collection bins, shoveling their neighbors' driveways and delivering Toys for Tots. But the sharing impulse is year-round, so much a part of our communities that it's background noise.

People are tutoring in schools, cleaning up parks and rivers, building playgrounds, running PTAs, guiding museum tours, comforting folks at hospitals, mentoring young adults, visiting nursing homes, coaching Special Olympians. They serve on school boards and town councils and on boards of charitable organizations. People are riding bicycles, walking 10Ks, walking long distances to fight disease and suffering. People are carrying lasagna to the grief-stricken and hauling outgrown clothes to nonprofit thrift stores. People are building houses, planting trees, fighting fires. And they are opening their check books, their PayPal accounts, their Google Wallets: last year, Americans donated a

record \$410 billion to charities, according to Giving USA.

This urge to pitch in knows no age, no race, no gender, no income level. And refreshingly, no politics.

I think we face two kinds of problems in this world: Forever problems and right-now problems. Forever problems are those persistent challenges, vast and complex, that humans confront but seldom solve. They touch so many facets of our nature and the social order, and are so entangled with one another, that they transcend the personal to become political.

Take, for example, the distribution of wealth. Some people have hardly any money; others have unimaginable mountains of it. Versions of this reality have perplexed the world for ages, and it remains a defining political question for 21st-century Americans. Some see it primarily as a problem of educational opportunity. Some see it as a matter of taxation. Some see it as a question of corporate control. Some see it as a matter of justice. Some see it as a manifestation of greed—a moral failing. Some see it as a manifestation of slow growth—an economic question.

It is safe to say that when the public can't agree on the cause or even the definition of a problem, we're not on the brink of a solution. And that's a reassuring check on this problem on papyrus scrolls and in medieval libraries, in Dante, Shakespeare, Dickens and Toni Morrison: It is a forever problem. In Matthew's account of his ministry, Jesus said: "The poor you will always have with you." Despite centuries of thought and hard work, of debate and revolutions, the problem remains accurate.

Timely access to effective and affordable health care seems to be another fore-

er problem. So, too, is the education young people need to build happy, productive lives. And it's not to hear our politicians and pundits arguing about week in and week out is entangled in forever problems. They are thorny and frustrating and often divisive. Their very complexity invites oversimplified answers and lines in the sand. The politics of forever problems give us the feeling that the nation is helplessly divided, impotent, and helpless in the grip of our challenges.

But as much as forever problems push us apart, right-now problems tend to bring us together. These are the human-scaled, ground-level vicissitudes of life, and though we cannot erase them, we routinely pitch in to soften their edges without a moment's thought about political differences. We may not be able to agree on the future of health care, but give us a family down the street with cancer in their midst, and we'll figure out how to get meals to them during the winter.

As the man said: There are a thousand points of light. So let us not be discouraged by the difficulty of forever problems, but in seeking their solutions, may we draw on the goodwill of the bellringers, the child comforters, the feeders of the hungry, the soothers of the sick. They aren't the noisy ones, but you can find them on every boulevard and in every burg. Ad hoc and undirected, they face the right-now problems with a unifying resolve. They are the glue, and the glory, of our persistently imperfect human society, the better angels of our nature taking wing.

Washington Post columnist David Von Drehle was previously an editor at large for Time magazine, and is the author of "Rise to Greatness: Abraham Lincoln and America's Most Perilous Year" and "Triangle: The Fire That Changed America."

US has chance to help victims of genocide in Myanmar

By MATTHEW SMITH

Special to The Washington Post

THIS month Secretary of State Mike Pompeo questioned the effectiveness of the United Nations. "Does it continue to serve its mission faithfully?" he asked rhetorically.

He has a point. At least one organ of the U.N.—the Security Council—has roundly failed to serve its mission to maintain international peace and security.

Case in point: Myanmar. Last year, the Myanmar military led horrific attacks against Rohingya civilians in response to a dozen killings by militants. Building off similar attacks one year prior, soldiers, police and civilians razed hundreds of villages and camps, shot, slashed, and in some cases burned men, women and children alive. Soldiers gang-raped women and girls in plain view, killing at least several thousand civilians in the first two weeks of their "clearance operations." More than 700,000 Rohingyas fled to Bangladesh.

An independent U.N. fact-finding mission, my own organization Fortify Rights, the U.S. Institute of Medicine and others have documented and published evidence of genocide against the Rohingyas.

The closest the Security Council came to action was sending a mission to meet Rohingya refugees in April.

For several years, my colleagues and I have urged the Rohingyas survivors to navigate the halls of government and the U.N., where they've advocated for the Security Council to refer the situation in Myanmar to the International Criminal Court. Diplomats and officials have often cited China and the United States as two unmovable obstacles to international justice.

But our meetings with senior Trump appointees suggest otherwise. Many in the

Trump administration, as well as members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, are horrified by the crimes against Rohingya and want to see justice served. They know what's at stake for Myanmar and the world if we let those who are responsible for genocide live out their lives with impunity.

Nevertheless, fierce opposition to the ICC remains in President Donald Trump's administration, championed by national security adviser John Bolton. In September, Bolton publicly denounced the ICC as "unfair and biased" and threatened to impose sanctions if it attempted to prosecute U.S. nationals for any alleged crimes in Afghanistan. Bolton's view of the court isn't new—it goes back to the court's founding in 2002 and hinges on an opposition to the idea that the ICC would ever have jurisdiction over U.S. nationals and officials.

Despite Bolton's ire, the court, the U.S. could still help ensure international justice for the Rohingyas. In 2005, President George W. Bush assented to the Security Council's referral of the situation in Sudan to the ICC, despite the fact that Bolton had effectively pulled the U.S. out of the ICC the year before.

There are other options as well. Pompeo could activate the United States' unmatched political and economic leverage to ensure the Security Council exercises its authority under Chapter VII to establish a separate tribunal, as it has on multiple occasions, to investigate and try the crimes committed against the Rohingyas. This would be consistent with recommendations by the independent U.N. fact-finding mission on Myanmar as well as Rohingya advocates, and it would go a long way to addressing Pompeo's concern that the U.N. is not serving its mission "faithfully."

The United States and other sympathetic governments would have to incentiv-

ize China and Russia and other would-be spoilers to let justice run its course, which is not unthinkable. In the past, China and Russia stepped aside to allow referrals to the ICC and the creation of tribunals.

An ICC referral or the creation of an international tribunal to prosecute atrocity crimes in Myanmar would send helpful shock waves through the country and could deter the next round of mass killing. Sources tell us senior generals in Myanmar are worried about international justice, as was the case with the 2007 genocide in Darfur.

Critics will say the international justice system is slow and expensive, often taking decades and tens of millions of dollars to secure a single conviction. They're correct. That's precisely why the United States and others should work to improve it. Accepting impunity for genocide is not an option. Myanmar's legal system is weak, but not a silver bullet, which is why Pompeo should also urgently pursue other policy options on Myanmar. He should declare the crimes against Rohingyas to be genocide and crimes against humanity, and then establish benchmarks for progress with the Myanmar government, including tactical support. Benchmarks could draw on 88 recommendations by a commission led by the late Kofi Annan and include targets for the restoration of full citizenship rights for Rohingyas, freedom of movement, and free and unfettered access for aid groups, human rights monitors and the media. If Myanmar fails to show progress over a specified period of time, the U.S. government should consider additional sanctions.

It's one thing to question the effectiveness of the U.N. It's another to watch another genocide unfold—and do nothing.

Matthew Smith is co-founder and CEO of Fortify Rights, the 2018 recipient of the Roger E. Joseph Prize.

OPINION

Blue Dog Dems poised to play crucial role

By JOSH ROGIN
The Washington Post

The Democratic Party spent enormous amounts of time and money recruiting and supporting moderate, centrist candidates as part of its strategy to take control of the House in last month's midterm elections — and it worked. Now, these very lawmakers are organizing to assert their influence. If they succeed, they might just keep their jobs and save the Democratic majority in the House.

The Blue Dog Coalition began in 1995 after Democrats lost power in the most stunning electoral defeat of that era. Originally made up of mostly older, white, Southern men, their name was inspired by the iconic yellow-eyed blue dog painted by artist George Rodrigue. A post- Reconstruction adage had stated that Southerners would rather vote for a yellow dog than a Republican. But by the 1990s, Southern Democrats said that yellow dog was being "choked blue" by the extreme sides of both parties, hence the name Blue Dogs.

The founding principle of the group was that fiscally conservative, national-security-minded Democrats needed to stick together — and occasionally stick it to their own party's leadership — to survive and get stuff done. But the Blue Dog Coalition will look a lot different in 2019 than it did in 1995. It now includes Northerners, young people and veterans. It is led by an Asian-American woman who served in the Pentagon and just won her first re-election in a purple Florida district that supports

The question for likely speaker Nancy Pelosi will be how she balances the wants of the progressive side of her caucus with the needs of the members from red and purple districts who actually gave Democrats the majority.

both gun control and gay rights.

"The makeup of our coalition has changed," Rep. Stephanie Murphy, D-Fla., told me. "It's not your Southern Democratic Blue Dog Coalition anymore."

Murphy and her co-chairmen, Rep. Luis Correa, of California, and Rep. Tom O'Halleran, of Arizona, are growing their coalition by recruiting from the incoming freshman class. It is no accident they've signed up Afghanistan War veteran Max Rose, of New York, former CIA officer Abigail Spanberger, of Virginia, and former Salt Lake City Mayor Ben McAdams. Their theory of the case is that competence, pragmatism and experience in public service are attributes voters crave in the age of President Donald Trump.

Republicans have ceded huge territory in the center, Murphy said, by abandoning fiscal responsibility on debt and deficits while following Trump as he takes the GOP toward a nationalist trade and foreign policy.

"We have a unique opportunity," she said. "It is a moment when the Blue Dogs have an opportunity to be a strong, reasonable voice. ... In contrast to some of the reckless policies we are seeing."

They know the progressive far-left

Democrats entering Congress are getting the lion's share of media attention. For example, Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, of New York, has a district just miles from Rose's but gets drastically more coverage, in part because of her willingness to oppose party leadership and advocate economic and foreign-policy ideas that are outside the mainstream.

The question for likely speaker Nancy Pelosi, of California, will be how she balances the wants of the progressive side of her caucus with the needs of the members from red and purple districts who actually gave Democrats the majority.

Sixty-four percent of the 42 seats Democrats flipped in the 2018 midterms will be held by members of the Blue Dogs or the moderate New Democratic Coalition; only 27 percent of those seats will be held by members of the Progressive Caucus. Of the 20 congressional districts now held by Democrats but that favored Trump in 2016, 11 are Blue Dog or New Dem members; only three are in the Progressive Caucus.

Ocasio-Cortez won with 78 percent of the vote. Rose won with less than 53 percent. If Pelosi still wants to be speaker after two years, Democrats must convince constituents in districts such as Rose's that their

party represents them.

"Our districts have a different look to them and a different face to them, and we have to recognize that and the caucus has to recognize that," O'Halleran told me.

The risk for Democrats is that the squeaky wheels will wind up getting the grease and the loudest voices will become the voice of the party.

"Pragmatism never has been and never will be a sexy message, but these members were elected in part because of their pragmatism," said Democratic strategist Rodell Mollineau, a partner at ROK Solutions, a Washington consultancy. "The priority is maintaining and expanding the majority. As a bloc, there's a lot of strength in the Blue Dog Coalition."

The Blue Dogs' challenge is not just about marketing. They are preaching moderation, compromise and bipartisanship in an environment characterized by divided government, partisanship, the prospect of two years of investigations into the administration and potential impeachment proceedings. Also, a presidential election campaign is right around the corner.

Even if the Democratic leadership gives its centrist and moderate members the opportunities and cover they need to be independent and focus on their districts, greater forces may continue to push both parties to their extremes. Democrats must decide whether they want to assuage their angriest elements or govern from the middle and keep their power.

Josh Rogin is a columnist for the Global Opinions section of The Washington Post. He writes about foreign policy and national security.

'Blue Water Navy' bill backers press Trump to press senators

By TOM PHILPOTT

Special to Stars and Stripes

Using the last arrow in their quiver, veteran groups and service organizations urged President Donald Trump on Wednesday to use his personal influence with two Republican senators to persuade them to allow a vote on the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (HR 299) before the 115th Congress expires this week.

In a joint letter hand-delivered to the White House, seven groups representing a combined 5 million veterans asked Trump to issue "a public statement of support for the legislation, indicating that you would sign this bill."

They predicted this "could help to persuade" Sens. Mike Enzi, of Wyoming, and Mike Lee, of Utah, to drop their opposition and allow a fast-track "unanimous consent" vote, which they predicted "would receive overwhelming support."

Enzi on Monday evening blocked a first attempt for a unanimous consent vote on the bill made on a motion from Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y. Sen. Johnny Isakson, R-Ga., chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, endorsed the motion, but Enzi used authority that every individual senator has to block such votes.

Within six minutes of Gillibrand filing her motion, Isakson delivered his supportive pitch and Enzi blocked the vote.

Isakson argued his committee had "done the hard work" needed for colleagues to feel comfortable passing the bill by unanimous consent, to think about what you're doing," Isakson said. "You're saying 'no' to those who have had a benefit taken away from them by the VA itself. You're putting off a decision we're going to have to make in the future. You're not allowing us to do what we really ought to do."

Enzi immediately opposed the motion, citing a fresh cost estimate of \$1.3 billion

MILITARY UPDATE

fairs under new Secretary Robert Wilkie had begun attacking it vigorously with the encouragement of the veteran policy officials in the Trump White House.

The bill would make tens of thousands of ailing veterans who had served on ships in territorial waters off Vietnam, and their survivors, eligible for VA disability compensation and health care for health conditions associated with exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides sprayed on jungles in Vietnam during the war to expose enemy positions.

"We finally have addressed all those things everybody has said about the Blue Water Bill [that] they didn't like," Isakson said. "Except some people want another study [or] to wait until the VA says they need this, that or the other. [Or] we don't even have the right number as to how many people this might affect."

What the Senate does know, said Isakson, is that the original Agent Orange Act of 1991 allowed VA to presume exposure to herbicides for anyone who served in the war. After years later, in 2002, did VA interpret the law as applying only to veterans who served ashore. Later still, it expanded Agent Orange benefits to "brown water" veterans who had patrolled rivers and harbors of Vietnam.

"I would just ask every member, before they consider casting a no vote against this unanimous consent, to think about what you're doing," Isakson said. "You're saying 'no' to those who have had a benefit taken away from them by the VA itself. You're putting off a decision we're going to have to make in the future. You're not allowing us to do what we really ought to do."

Enzi immediately opposed the motion, citing a fresh cost estimate of \$1.3 billion

over 10 years from the Congressional Budget Office, which is higher than the CBO estimate given the House before it passed HR 299 in June. VA's own analysis projects costs five times higher than that original estimate, Enzi added.

There's clearly more work to do just on figuring out the spending and the administration of this, and the deficit impacts this bill will have," said Enzi, who has watched the national debt balloon as chairman of the Senate Budget Committee.

Another concern he cited was that HR 299 would cover part of the cost of expanding Agent Orange-related benefits to Blue Water veterans by raising fees on veterans using the VA home loan program. But fee increases planned would not be near enough to cover revised cost estimates. Also, he added, it's still uncertain how many veterans and survivors would become eligible for Agent Orange benefits, the range of estimates falling between 60,000 and 440,000, he said.

"That's a pretty big gap on who we let in, if they've got a [health] problem we need to take care of," Enzi said. Therefore, despite the work done on HR 299 this year by Isakson, Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., and colleagues, still more time and study are required.

Wilkie had urged the Senate delay passage of HR 299 at least a year to consider findings of a new study to be released in 2019 comparing the overall health of Vietnam veterans with that of all Americans of similar ages.

On Tuesday, Gillibrand, Tester, who is ranking Democrat on the Veterans' Affairs Committee, and Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., held a press conference with veteran group representatives. The senators vowed to file at least one more motion for a unanimous consent vote on HR 299 in the days ahead.

The veterans groups who appealed to

Trump — Disabled American Veterans, The American Legion, Military Officers Association of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America, AMVETS and Paralyzed Veterans of America — believe another unanimous consent motion will give the president time to reverse VA's own stand on this issue and pressure Enzi and Lee to drop their opposition, a move that would gain the everlasting gratitude of Blue Water Navy veterans.

Tester predicted that if Enzi or Lee continue to block a unanimous consent vote, almost two years would pass before the "scintilla of evidence" that when our nation asks its bravest men and women to serve in harm's way, America assumes a sacred obligation to care and compensate for the injuries and illnesses they suffer during that service.

"We understand there is concern about the cost to provide benefits and health care to Blue Water Navy veterans suffering ... illnesses linked to Agent Orange," the vet groups told Trump. "But when our nation asks its bravest men and women to serve in harm's way, America assumes a sacred obligation to care and compensate for the injuries and illnesses they suffer during that service.

"Some have argued that Congress should continue waiting until there is more 'scintilla' evidence. However, numerous studies by the Centers for Disease Control [and Prevention], the National Academy of Medicine and others have already found there is no scientific basis to exclude [these] veterans from benefits linked to Agent Orange exposure."

Enzi's letter to Joseph R. Biden, the president who often took his "incredible" support for veterans, advising Trump that they "look forward to the day when you will be able to sign this legislation and finally pay a long overdue debt to thousands of Blue Water Navy Vietnam veterans."

Sent comments to Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, Va. 20120; email milupdate@aol.com; Twitter: @Military_Update.

WORLD

Group tricks neo-Nazis into outing themselves

By Isaac Stanley-Becker

The Washington Post

The website went live last Monday, taking aim at so-called "problem Germans." "Wanted: Where are these idiots work?" asked the prompt. It directed visitors to images of some of the 7,000 people that the website's sponsor, the German art collective called the Center for Political Beauty, or "ZPS" in German, said took part in a right-wing mob that seized the streets of Chemnitz this summer.

The Web page asked members of the public to identify neo-Nazis at the protests, which turned the former industrial hub of prewar eastern Germany into a cauldron of xenophobic anger in the heart of Saxony, where the nationalist, anti-immigrant Alternative for Germany, or AfD, won more than a quarter of votes in 2017, making it the strongest party in the state on Germany's far-eastern flank. The protests shocked the world, prompting comparisons to last summer's deadly white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Va. They pulled back the curtain on resurgent nationalism and racial hatred in a country whose crimes against humanity helped forge powerful postwar taboos.

ZPS promised a cash reward for leads, ranging from \$34 to \$126.

"Denounce your work colleagues, neighbors or acquaintances today and collect immediate cash," read the online appeal.

The art group said it aimed to "give a face to evil," part of its "Special Commission Chemnitz" campaign launched in response to the furor that erupted in August, when word got out that an Iraqi and a Syrian were suspected of killing a German man in a knife attack. Extremists took to the streets, waving German flags and chas-

ing dark-skinned people.

The street scenes made Philipp Ruch, the founder and artistic director of ZPS, wonder: "Who are these guys?"

The answer to his question was partly supplied by the "guys" themselves. They got trapped in a so-called "honey pot" set up by the left-wing art group, frantically searching their names and the names of associates once ZPS put the results of its initial sleuthing online for all to see.

Ruch now claims his organization will be able to reveal at least 80 percent of the roughly 7,000 people who assembled in Chemnitz. It's a novel approach to doxing, which has trickled up from online subcultures that thrive on Reddit and 4chan to become a more mainstream, though still controversial, approach to exposing extremists.

ZPS, a self-described "assault team" that "believes that Germany should not only learn from its history but also take action," is still weighing what to do with the data, and whether to hand it over to authorities. But, "if you ask me," Ruch offered, "they should lose their jobs."

"I am convinced that nobody who's into these anti-democratic forces should ever have a right to work in this society," he said in an interview with The Washington Post. "There needs to be a shock-and-awe strategy."

First, he had to find out who they were.

Where did the protesters work? Did they

have families? What defined their private lives? What experiences might explain their motive for brandishing a swastika or giving a Nazi salute — criminalized under German law — in broad daylight?

Ruch resolved to find out, believing the danger to democratic society to be as grave as it was in 1945, when the Allied powers embarked on a denazification program that saw the swift dismissal of 42 percent of public officials, though the endeavor faltered and was abandoned within three years.

ZPS has made a name for itself through performance art doubling as political comment, taking on the most divisive contemporary debates.

The projects seek to change the political climate by revealing unspoken truths, Ruch said. "This is the power of art."

By researching postwar denazification, the artists came to see employment as the pivotal issue. Their aim became to deny jobs to those professing anti-democratic views, banishing them from polite society. Then Chemnitz happened, making urgent this undertaking.

Using "open-source intelligence," Ruch said, the group decided to "try to identify everybody who was in the streets on these days."

He said ZPS was able to identify 1,500 people with relative certainty, all by scraping publicly available information, including photos from social media and Nazi blogs, and plugging the findings into facial recognition software.

But 1,500 was only a fraction of the protesters present, ZPS knew.

"So we said, 'Let's use the 1,500 names that we have as a weapon to find all the other names, to attract everybody else,'" as Ruch explained the group's thinking. They built the Web page so that only a small se-

lection of photos appeared at a time, but included a search function for anyone who wanted to test the scope of the findings.

They took their results live last week, announcing the website's launch at a news conference in Berlin. It drew immediate scrutiny, as the office of Germany's data protection commissioner said it would analyze the site, according to the Süddeutsche Zeitung newspaper.

But ZPS didn't need much time. On Wednesday, the group took the page down, replacing the photographs with the celebratory "Thank you, dear Nazis" and an explanation of the stunt. Neo-Nazis had flocked to the site to search their own names, Ruch said, supplying information about their networks, whereabouts and even their employers in the process. The group is still working through the data but believes it could help identify another several thousand protesters at least, Ruch said.

ZPS is most intent on exposing public employees, he added, because they have a duty of loyalty to the constitution.

"We are very interested in information that came from IP addresses owned by the state," he said. The art collective is also paying close attention to users that stayed more than 10 minutes on the site, and on people who returned multiple times.

Chemnitz, Ruch predicted, would be the central event in which Germany would be remembered in 2018. His hope, he said, is that the days of violent protest are recalled not just as a new high-water mark for German nationalism but as an alarm bell initiating a new denazification.

"I always believed the promise, 'never again,'" Ruch said, repeating the mantra of the Holocaust remembrance movement. "But the ground is shifting."

Egypt finds tomb from 5th dynasty

Associated Press

SAQQARA, Egypt — Egypt on Saturday announced the discovery of a private tomb belonging to a senior official from the 5th dynasty of the pharaohs, which ruled roughly 4,400 years ago.

Antiquities Minister Khaled al-Anani announced the find at the site of the tomb in Saqqara, just west of Cairo, which is also home to the famed Step Pyramid.

He said drawings on the tomb's walls were "exceptionally well-preserved."

The drawings depicted the official and his family, he added.

The tomb also contained a total of 45 statues carved in rock. Again, they depict the official and his family.

In recent years, Egypt has heavily promoted new archaeological finds in the hope of attracting more tourists to the country.

The vital tourism sector has suffered from the years of political turmoil and violence that followed a 2011 uprising that toppled autocrat Hosni Mubarak.



PHOTOS BY AMR NABIL/AP

Above: Excavation worker Saeed Abdel Al stands Saturday at a recently uncovered tomb of an official from the 5th dynasty of the pharaohs. The site is near Step Pyramid in Giza, Egypt. **Below:** Mustafa Abdo, chief of excavation workers, walks through the recently uncovered tomb.



Putin says rap music should be controlled, not banned, in Russia

Associated Press

MOSCOW — Alarmed by the growing popularity of rap among Russian youth, President Vladimir Putin wants cultural leaders to devise a means of controlling, rather than banning, the popular music.

Putin says "if it is impossible to stop, then we must lead it and direct it."

But Putin said at a St. Petersburg meeting with cultural advisers Saturday that attempts to ban artists from performing will have an adverse effect and bolster their popularity.

Putin noted that "rap is based on three pillars: sex, drugs and protest." But he is particularly concerned with drug themes prevalent in rap, saying "this is a path to the degradation of the nation."

He said "drug propaganda" is worse than cursing.

Putin's comments come amid a crackdown on contemporary music that evoked Soviet-era censorship of the arts.

Last month, a rapper known as Husky, whose videos have gar-

nered more than 6 million views on YouTube, was arrested after he staged an impromptu performance when his show was shut down in the southern Russian city of Krasnodar.

The 25-year-old rapper, known for his lyrics about poverty, corruption and police brutality, was preparing to take to the stage on Nov. 21 when local prosecutors warned the venue that his act had elements of what they termed "extremism."

Husky climbed onto a car, surrounded by hundreds of fans, and chanted "I will sing my music, the most honest music!" before he was taken away by police.

On Nov. 30, rapper Gone.Fludd announced two concert cancellations, citing pressure from "every police agency you can imagine," while the popular hip-hop artist Alti canceled his show in the Arctic city of Yakutsk after receiving threats of violence.

Other artists have been affected as well — pop sensation Monetochka and punk band Friendzoned were among those who had their concerts shut down by the authorities last month.

AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Couple accuses store of misrepresenting rugs

KN KANSAS CITY — A couple claims a rug company sold them an "antique Persian rug" that may not have been Persian and might have been altered to appear in older condition.

The Kansas City Star reported that Maranatha and David Christie filed a lawsuit against Knotty Rug Co. The Johnson County couple said an appraiser told them the rug they bought for \$28,000 in December 2014 wasn't antique and possibly not Persian.

The lawsuit also alleges the store misrepresented about 14 other rugs the couple purchased for more than \$39,000 in September 2014.

The lawsuit comes after the store agreed to buy back the Persian rug and two others for nearly \$39,000.

Theft of Salvation Army kettle caught on video

MN BLAINE — The Grinch stealing Christmas is supposed to be a story reserved for movies and books. However, a community in Blaine experienced the real thing, when two thieves stole a red Salvation Army kettle from outside a Cub Foods store on Dec. 4.

Surveillance video showed two people stealing the money intended to go toward Salvation Army services, which include food, shelter, rehabilitation and disaster relief for the poor. The thieves appear to have used bolt cutters to remove the donation bucket from its stand.

"I believe it's pretty low, pretty pathetic, to prey on a charity at this time of the year that's raising money to help those in need," Capt. Mark Boerboom of the Blaine Police Department said. "It was a brazen theft in the middle of the day."

Police are still searching for the thieves, known as "the Two Grinches." Authorities have released photos from the surveillance camera to aid in the investigation. It is not known how much money was in the kettle.

Police: Woman charged after running over son

MI BELMONT — Authorities have charged a woman with reckless driving after police said she ran over her son, 9, while dropping him off at school.

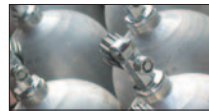
Court records show Tiffany Kosakowski, 36, was arraigned Friday in Kent County with second-degree child abuse and reckless driving causing serious impairment of a body function. She was released on a personal-recognition bond.

Prosecutors charged Kosakowski after reviewing police reports about the incident that left her son hospitalized in critical condition. MLive.com reported the third-grader was run over Tuesday in the Chandler Woods Charter Academy's parking lot in East Kent. Police say the rear tire of his mother's vehicle injured his head and torso.

THE CENSUS

\$197K

The amount of a fine that a scuba gear company in Lacey, Wash., received for illegally dumping lead and arsenic down a toilet. A July 2018 investigation by Ecology and Department of Labor & Industries found that lead dust was present on exposed surfaces inside and outside Seastoff Scuba's warehouse.



JOSHUA L. JONES, ATHENS (Ga.) BANNER-HERALD/AP

Red and Black baccalaureate

Graduates are covered in streamers as they celebrate after the University of Georgia's fall commencement in Athens, Ga., on Friday.

Miniature horses help students de-stress

MO ST. LOUIS — Saint Louis University has a novel approach for helping students de-stress before finals: miniature horses.

KSDK-TV reported that Taylorville-Illinois-based Heartland Mini Hoofs brought three horses to the school on Tuesday. Outside the library, students squealed as they approached the horses and took selfies with them.

Andra Ebert of Heartland Mini Hoofs said "your stress goes down" immediately when you touch the horses.

The university's department of public safety came up with the idea of bringing the horses. Officer Josh Johnson said officers know finals are "tough" and said the hope is that the horses will "bring some good."

Freshman Molly Dippel said she'd been feeling stressed, but "the second I saw this horse, everything disappeared."

Restraining order set against sixth-grader

FL LAKELAND — A sixth-grade student at a middle school has been issued a restraining order to stay away from another student who he is accused of beating badly.

A judge issued the restraining order last week, requiring the student to stay 50 feet away from the other student.

The judge found that the student had stalked and bullied the victim again following the beating last month.

A police report says that last month the student picked up the victim by his shoulders, slammed him into the pavement and repeatedly punched him in the head after the victim refused to give him popcorn he was selling for a fundraiser.

The Lakeland Ledger reported that following the judge's decision the student accused of the bullying in Lakeland, Fla., was transferred to another school.

Candidate loses race after roll of the dice

AR WALNUT RIDGE — A city council candidate in northeastern Arkansas whose runoff election ended in a tie after he didn't vote has lost his bid for the seat by a roll of the dice.

The race for a seat on the Hoxie City Council was determined by Cliff Farmer and incumbent Alderwoman Becky Linebaugh rolling dice at the Lawrence County courthouse on Thursday. Deputy Clerk Ashlyn Griffin says Farmer rolled a four and Linebaugh rolled a six.

Farmer had intended to vote in last week's runoff election after returning from a work-related trip to Florida, but he and his wife landed in Memphis, Tenn., only an hour before polls closed. Memphis is about 80 miles from Hoxie. Farmer's wife had voted early.

Farmer and Linebaugh each received 223 votes in the runoff election.

Grand marshal's sex convictions draw ire

MS SARDIS — Some people are complaining after the local chamber of commerce chose a sex offender as the grand marshal of the town Christmas parade.

WMC-TV reported Michael Saripkin presided over the Sardis Christmas parade Tuesday.

Saripkin was convicted in Tennessee of sexual battery in 1990 and statutory rape in 1997. In 2013, he was convicted in Mississippi of inappropriately touching a child. Store owner Carolyn Whaley said she knew of Saripkin's past but didn't object to the honor. She said Saripkin has donated money to civic causes and encouraged businesses to move to Sardis.

Officials with the city of Sardis and the chamber of commerce couldn't be reached for comment. From wire reports

FACES



Low-key contender

John Krasinski turned 'A Quiet Place' into a surprise hit — could an Oscar be next?

By ANN HORNBADY
The Washington Post

John Krasinski knew he had a potential hit on his hands when he attended a test screening for "A Quiet Place." A horror movie about a family battling largely unseen creatures who attack at the slightest noise, the film transpires with no verbal dialogue: The characters communicate with American Sign Language, or through meaningful glances and gestures.

This wasn't Krasinski's first effort as a director; still, he and his wife, Emily Blunt — who play the parents in "A Quiet Place" — weren't sure audiences would accept a genre picture that harked back to cinema's silent roots more than its special effects-driven present.

But at that test screening, toward the end of the feedback session, an executive asked the audience if there was anything the creative or marketing teams "needed to know" about the movie.

"And this guy raised his hand, and he was shaking," Krasinski recalled last week. "And he goes, 'What you need to know about this movie is that I snuck in a bag of Skittles and for 90 minutes I held it up like this' — Krasinski held up two hands with pursed fingers — "and never passed rip."

Millions of people were similarly rapt by "A Quiet Place," which became one of the first bona fide phenoms of 2018, a \$17 million passion project that went on to earn more than \$340 million, making it not just a hit with audiences but an unexpected commercial bonanza. In an era when studios are putting their chips on remakes and sequels, madly mining their archives for intellectual property they can exploit, this bold exercise in pure cinema proves that an original movie, with no "pre-sold" audience or built-in franchising potential, can still lure filmgoers into theaters.

Krasinski, 39, is hoping that "A Quiet Place" can prove another concept, namely that a genre film can still be awards-worthy. He was in Washington on Dec. 12 to accept the Smithsonian magazine's 2018 American Ingenuity Award for visual arts. The stop was part of a strategy to overcome an obstacle faced by movies released early in the year: With the awards race unofficially beginning at film festivals in August and September, studios habitually hold their prestige pictures for the end of the year, capitalizing on the free public-

ity of red carpets and best-of lists, and swamping filmgoers with a fire hose full of great films after nine months of drought.

The reminder tour just might be working: On Dec. 11, the American Film Institute announced that "A Quiet Place" was among its 10 finest films of 2018; on Dec. 12 the film was nominated for a Golden Globe for best musical score. It's already showing up on several movie critics' best-of lists. Each mention helps put "A Quiet Place" top of mind with Academy Awards voters who will be sending in their nominations in January.

Obviously, an Oscar nomination, much less a win, won't help "A Quiet Place" at the box office. But Krasinski is invested if only to prove that the artistic sophistication, technical excellence and emotional intimacy we usually associate with "award movies" can apply to a horror or action film just as much as a literary chamber piece or highly polished studio drama.

Oscar or not, Krasinski said that "A Quiet Place" changed his life, not only because he got to work with Blunt, but because it fulfilled a sense of deeply personal mission that he didn't know he had when he went into the project. Originally approached to act in the film, he agreed only if he could rewrite it; when he shared his ideas with Blunt — who was holding their 3-week-old daughter at the time — she told him he had to direct. The resulting film wound up expressing all the anxieties he had been trying to process as a husband and a father grappling with issues of fear, vulnerability, powerlessness and the fierce determination to protect the ones you love.

And, weirdly, his breakout stint playing Everydude Jim Halpert on the sitcom "The Office" had more to do with his approach to "A Quiet Place" than many might think. One of the first pieces of advice he got from the show's producer, Greg Daniels, was not to be funny.

"You don't know you're funny," Daniels said to him about Jim. "So if you just deliver your lines and people think you're funny, that's up to them. If people think what you say to Pam makes them cry, that's up to them, too."

He said that when he prepared to direct the movie, "if I'd said, 'I'm gonna make the best scary movie you've ever seen,' I not only wouldn't have been able to do it, but I would have made a horrible movie."

Krasinski insists it's that emotional core, rather than the jump scares or the explosive climactic showdown that explains why audiences responded to "A Quiet Place" so strongly.

As for the awards themselves, he's philosophical. "No one's going to tell you that if you don't win an Oscar you've lost something," he said. "But you can certainly gain something in the conversation of what movies are."



AP

Grammy-winning jazz singer Nancy Wilson, shown performing in 2017, died Dec. 13 after a long illness. She was 81.

Iconic jazz singer dies

Nancy Wilson, the Grammy-winning torch singer whose polished pop-jazz vocals made her a platinum artist and top concert performer, has died.

Wilson, who retired from touring in 2011, died after a long illness at her home in Pioneertown, a California desert community near Joshua Tree National Park, her manager and publicist Devra Hall Levy told The Associated Press late Dec. 13. She was 81.

Influenced by Dinah Washington, Nat "King" Cole and other stars, Wilson covered everything from jazz standards to "Little Green Apples" and in the 1960s released six albums that reached the top 20 on Billboard's pop charts. Sometimes elegant and understated, or quick and conversational and a little naughty, she was best known for such songs as her breakthrough "Ghosts Who I Saw Today" and the 1964 hit "You Don't Know How Glad I Am," which drew upon Broadway, pop and jazz.

She resisted being identified with one category, and referred to herself as a "song stylist."

Other news

■ Actress **Sandra Locke** has died. A death certificate obtained by The Associated Press shows Locke died Nov. 3 at age 74 at her home in Los Angeles of cardiac arrest stemming from breast and bone cancer. Locke was best known for the six films she made with Clint Eastwood in the late 1970s and early '80s, including "The Outlaw Josey Wales," "Every Which Way But Loose" and "Shogun." She and Eastwood also had a 13-year romantic relationship. She was nominated for an Academy Award for best supporting actress for 1968's "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter," her first film.

Spanish prosecutors are charging Shakira with tax evasion, alleging the pop star failed to pay more than 14.5 million euros between 2012 and 2014. The charges published Dec. 14 allege Shakira listed the Bahamas as her official residence for tax purposes since three years but was living in Spain with her partner, Spanish soccer player Gerard Pique.

From The Associated Press

John Krasinski

ANDREW CHUNG
For The Washington Post

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BUSINESS/WEATHER

Security concerns holding Huawei back

By Joe McDonald
Associated Press

BEIJING — While a Huawei executive faces possible U.S. charges over trade with Iran, the Chinese tech giant's ambition to be a leader in next-generation telecoms is colliding with security worries abroad.

Australia and New Zealand have barred Huawei Technologies Ltd. as a supplier for fifth-generation networks.

They joined the United States and Taiwan, which limit the use of technology from the biggest global supplier of network switching gear. Last week, Japan's cybersecurity agency said Huawei and other vendors deemed risky will be off-limits for government purchases.

None has released evidence of wrongdoing by Huawei, which denies it is a risk and has operated a laboratory with Britain's government since 2010 to conduct security examinations of its products. But the accusations, amid rising tension over Chinese technology ambitions and spying, threaten its ability to compete in a sensitive field as carriers prepare to invest billions of dollars.

"This is something that's definitely concerning Huawei at this stage because there is a political angle to it and a business angle," said Nikhil Bhatra, a senior researcher for IDC.

Huawei, founded in 1987 by a former military engineer, is China's first global tech brand and a national champion at the head of an industry Beijing is promoting as part of efforts to transform this country into a technology creator. It has China's biggest corporate research-and-development budget at \$13 billion in 2017 — 10



MARK SCHIEFELBEIN/AP

Visitors look at a display for 5G wireless technology from Chinese technology firm Huawei on Sept. 26, at the PT Expo in Beijing.

percent more than Apple Inc.'s — and foreign customers can draw on a multibillion-dollar line of credit from the official China Development Bank.

That puts Huawei at the heart of strains over the ruling Communist Party's technology aspirations, competition with Western economies and ties between companies and government, including possibly spying.

A European Union official, Andrus Ansip, expressed concern that Chinese rules requiring telecom equipment suppliers to cooperate with intelligence services would involve possible "mandatory backdoors" in computer or telecom systems.

The company says it is employee-owned and operates independently.

It denies it designs equipment to allow eavesdropping or that it is controlled by the Communist

Party — a stance critics including some U.S. senators say is doubtful in China's state-dominated system. The company notes it uses the same global components suppliers as Western manufacturers.

"Not a single shred of evidence against the company has ever been presented," Huawei said in a written response to questions.

The company is the "most examined telecoms equipment vendor," the statement said. It said foreign officials visit regularly to see "the lengths we go to assure them of the integrity of our technology."

5G promises more than just faster mobile phone service. It is designed to support vastly expanded networks of devices from internet-linked cars and medical equipment to factory robots and nuclear power plants. Annual sales of 5G network gear are forecast to reach \$11 billion by 2022,

according to IHS Markit.

That makes it more politically sensitive, raises the potential cost of security failures and requires more trust in suppliers.

Even a "really minuscule" risk could disqualify a provider, said Andrew Kitson, head of technology industry research for Fitch Solutions.

But Kitson sees commercial motives behind the accusations against Huawei. He said many come from U.S. and European suppliers that are losing market share to Chinese rivals.

"There never has been any actual proof," said Kitson. "They've only got to make a few insinuations for other governments to sit up and think, hang on, even if there is no proof, it is too much of a risk."

Huawei took a new hit on Dec. 1 when its chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, was arrested in Vancouver on U.S. charges of lying to banks about transactions with Iran.

The company says it serves 45 of the 50 biggest global telecom operators. Its 2017 global sales rose 16 percent to \$92.5 billion while profits increased 28 percent to \$7.3 billion.

Huawei accounted for 28 percent of last year's \$32 billion global sales of mobile network gear, according to IHS Markit. Ericsson was second with 27 percent and Nokia had 23 percent.

Asked about the impact of security concerns on its 5G business, Huawei said this year's total revenue — which also includes the No. 3 global smartphone brand and an enterprise unit — should exceed \$100 billion. That would be an 8 percent gain over 2017.

Washington is pressing allies to shun Huawei, but Germany,

France and Ireland say they have no plans to ban any 5G network suppliers.

China's foreign ministry complained critics were "typical so-called threats" to hamper Huawei's business without evidence.

IDC's Bhatra warned excluding Huawei would leave countries with only two major 5G suppliers, Ericsson and Nokia. He said that would limit competition, raise prices and might slow innovation.

EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates	
Euro costs (Dec. 17)	\$1.1594
Dollar buys (Dec. 17)	\$0.8625
British pound (Dec. 17)	\$1.29
Japanese yen (Dec. 17)	\$0.0050
South Korean won (Dec. 17)	1,102.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (dinar)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.2549
Canada (dollar)	1.3387
China (yuan)	6.9066
Denmark (kroner)	6.6166
Egypt (pound)	17.9559
Euro	\$1.1284/0.8862
Hong Kong (dollar)	7.8140
Hungary (forint)	281.5
Israel (shekel)	3.7734
Japan (yen)	113.64
Kuwait (dinar)	0.3045
Norway (kroner)	8.2620
Philippines (peso)	53.11
Poland (zloty)	3.81
Saudi Arabia (riyal)	3.7512
Singapore (dollar)	1.3770
South Korea (won)	1,134.57
Switzerland (franc)	0.9977
Thailand (baht)	32.81
Turkey (lira)	4.4041
Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance. For Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (U.S. purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	

INTEREST RATES

Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	2.75
Federal funds market rate	2.20
3-month bill	2.37
30-year bond	3.14

WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

THE STARS AND STRIPES

Daily Newspaper of U.S. Armed Forces

in the European Theater of Operations

Vol. 1—No. 241

1 Fr.

1 Fr.

Sunday, March 25, 1945

For the troops

Stars and Stripes was a primary source of news for the troops at the Front and behind the lines in World War II. Although it printed only in the European theater during the war, it covered news from all theaters.



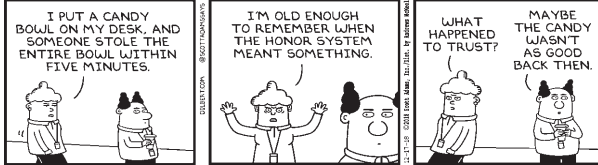
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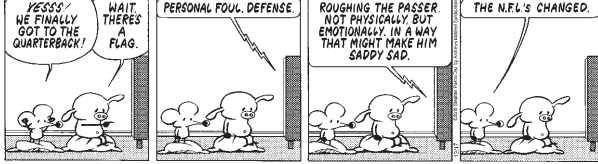
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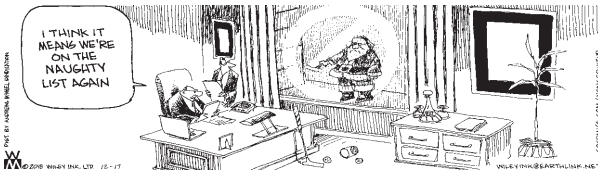
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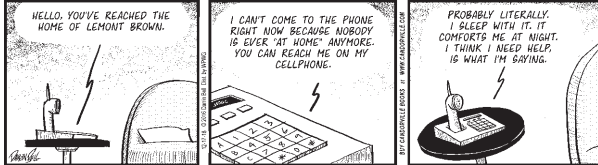
Pearls Before Swine



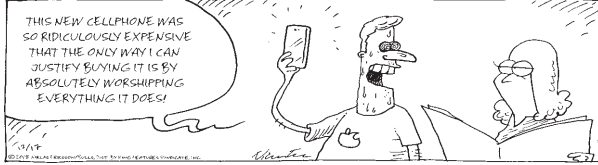
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



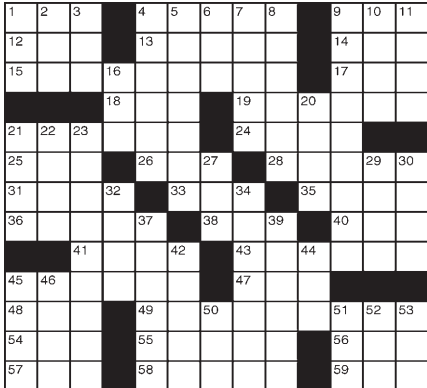
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Poke
- 4 Closes with a bang
- 9 Ump
- 12 Khan title
- 13 Devoured
- 14 Raw mineral
- 15 Moscow attraction
- 17 Espionage org.
- 18 Attila, notably
- 19 Sealing ring
- 21 Tirade
- 24 Stretches (out)
- 25 Roth svgs. plan
- 26 Allow
- 28 Sportscast offering
- 31 Protuberance
- 33 Shred
- 35 Cabbage salad
- 36 Long stories
- 38 Chairman of China
- 40 Presidential nickname
- 41 Killer whale
- 43 James of "The Blacklist"
- 45 Not dressy
- 47 Fall from grace
- 48 German cry
- 49 Symbol of Japan
- 54 I love (Lat.)

- 55 Higher than
- 56 Blackbird
- 57 Just out
- 58 Nibbles
- 59 Mom's mate

DOWN

- 1 Pickle holder
- 2 Bio stat
- 3 Abysmal
- 4 "Part II" film
- 5 Wash, as clothes
- 6 — glance
- 7 Combine
- 8 Furtive ones
- 9 Reliable
- 10 New York canal
- 11 Accomplishment
- 16 That girl
- 20 Brief moments
- 21 Trig function
- 22 Field yield
- 23 NPR's "Fresh Air," e.g.
- 27 Singer McGraw
- 29 Yard tool
- 30 Pitcher
- 32 Off-white
- 34 Lethargic
- 37 Ornamental beetle
- 39 Speaks one's mind
- 42 Suspect's excuse
- 44 Director Lee
- 45 James of "The Godfather"
- 46 Pinnacle
- 50 Drunkard
- 51 Potential syrup
- 52 Half of dos
- 53 Pinch

Answer to Previous Puzzle



12-17

CRYPTOQUIP

RI Y PHEESPMRHU HI IFTRM
MFSSC RC ASRUK AYLEO
USKESPMSL, R'L CYO MDYM'C

Y MHFMTFSL HFPDYFL.
Saturday's Cryptoquip: I COULD ENVISION MYSELF PACKING UP AND MOVING TO EITHER TULSA OR NORMAN. THEY'RE OK CITIES.
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: I equals F


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Announcements 040

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Automotive 140

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NHL

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference

Atlantic Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	23	11	1	23	124	92
Toronto	23	10	2	22	117	93
Buffalo	23	19	3	43	101	96
Montreal	23	17	5	39	108	107
Boston	22	17	11	4	38	88
Detroit	24	14	15	34	89	91
Ottawa	24	14	16	4	32	113
Florida	24	13	16	30	101	113

Metropolitan Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Washington	22	20	9	43	122	100
Columbus	22	17	12	37	107	92
Pittsburgh	22	15	11	6	36	110
Philadelphia	22	15	11	6	36	110
N.Y. Islanders	22	14	13	4	32	102
N.Y. Rangers	21	14	13	4	32	91
Carolina	21	13	13	5	31	93
New Jersey	21	11	17	29	94	111
Philadelphia	21	12	15	28	93	116

Western Conference

Central Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Nashville	23	22	10	44	104	92
Winnipeg	22	21	9	44	116	90
St. Louis	22	19	6	42	121	102
Minnesota	22	17	13	2	36	101
Chicago	23	16	14	3	35	92
San Jose	20	12	14	4	28	88
Chicago	24	10	18	6	26	128

Pacific Division						
GP	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Calgary	23	21	10	2	44	115
Anaheim	24	18	11	5	41	98
Edmonton	23	18	3	39	96	97
San Jose	23	17	11	5	39	105
Vancouver	23	16	12	3	38	98
Vancouver	25	16	14	4	34	106
Los Angeles	21	14	2	30	81	68
Los Angeles	21	11	20	3	25	75

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss. Top three teams in each division and two wild cards per conference advance to playoffs.

Friday's games

New Jersey 5, Vegas 4, OT
 Arizona 4, Boston 3, OT
 Arizona 4, N.Y. Rangers 3, OT
 Washington 6, Carolina 5, SO
 St. Louis 4, Colorado 3, OT
 Dallas 4, Chicago 2, OT
 Edmonton 4, Philadelphia 1
 N.Y. Islanders 4, Columbus 3, OT
 Montreal 5, Ottawa 2
 N.Y. Islanders 4, Detroit 3, SO
 Washington 4, Buffalo 3, OT
 Pittsburgh 4, Los Angeles 3, OT
 Florida 4, Toronto 2, OT
 Nashville 2, New Jersey 1, OT
 Colorado 6, Dallas 4
 N.Y. Islanders 4, Philadelphia 1

Saturday's games

Vegas at Rangers
 Arizona at Carolina
 Calgary at St. Louis
 Buffalo at Boston
 Tampa Bay at Winnipeg
 San Jose at Chicago
 Edmonton at Vancouver
 Winnipeg at Los Angeles
Monday's games
 Vegas at Columbus
 Anaheim at Pittsburgh
 Detroit at Montreal
 Nashville at Ottawa
 Dallas at Philadelphia
Tuesday's games
 Florida at Buffalo
 Detroit at Philadelphia
 Toronto at New Jersey
 Anaheim at N.Y. Rangers
 San Jose at Minnesota
 Dallas at Dallas
 Nashville at Chicago
 St. Louis at Edmonton
 N.Y. Islanders at Arizona
 Tampa Bay at Vancouver
 Winnipeg at Los Angeles

Sunday's games

Ducks 2, Blue Jackets 1 (OT)
 Anaheim 1, 0-0-1
 Columbus 1, 0-0-1
First Period—1. Anaheim, Nutivaara (Jenner), 12:06. 2, Anaheim, Sprong 2 (Jenner), 15:26.
Overtime—3. Anaheim, Sprong 3 (Hendrickson), 16:06.
Shots on goal—Anaheim: 7-7-1-22. Columbus 10-11-16-37.
Power-play opportunities—Anaheim 0 of 1; Columbus 0 of 3.
Goals—Anaheim, Gibson 14-9-4 (37 shots-36 saves). Columbus, Bobrovsky 12-10-1 (22-20).
A—16,171 (18,500). T—2:38.

Penguins 4, Kings 3 (OT)

Los Angeles 0, 0-3
 Pittsburgh 2, 1-0-1-4
First Period—1. Pittsburgh, Cullen 4 (Jenner), 12:06. 2, Pittsburgh, Rust 5 (Crosby, Guentzler), 13:04.
Second Period—3. Los Angeles, Muzzin 1 (Haltom), 12:22. 4, Pittsburgh, Pearson 4, 8:25. 5, Los Angeles, Luff 6 (Muzzin), 13:04.
Third Period—6. Los Angeles, Luff 6 (Muzzin), 3:30 (pp).
Overtime—1. Pittsburgh, Kessel 14 (Mazza, Malkin), 3:59 (pp).
Power-play opportunities—Los Angeles 4-1; Pittsburgh 12-13-8-36.
Goals—Los Angeles, Quattrone 2-8-2 (36 shots-29 saves). Florida, Barkov 1-1 (41-38).
A—18,627 (18,387). T—2:32.

Panthers 4, Maple Leafs 3 (OT)

Los Angeles 0, 0-3
 Pittsburgh 2, 1-0-1-4
First Period—1. Pittsburgh, Cullen 4 (Jenner), 12:06. 2, Pittsburgh, Rust 5 (Crosby, Guentzler), 13:04.
Second Period—3. Los Angeles, Muzzin 1 (Haltom), 12:22. 4, Pittsburgh, Pearson 4, 8:25. 5, Los Angeles, Luff 6 (Muzzin), 13:04.
Third Period—6. Los Angeles, Luff 6 (Muzzin), 3:30 (pp).
Overtime—1. Pittsburgh, Kessel 14 (Mazza, Malkin), 3:59 (pp).
Power-play opportunities—Los Angeles 4-1; Pittsburgh 12-13-8-36.
Goals—Los Angeles, Quattrone 2-8-2 (36 shots-29 saves). Florida, Barkov 1-1 (41-38).
A—18,627 (18,387). T—2:32.



GENE J. PUSKAS/AP

Pittsburgh's Tanner Pearson (14) is checked into the cage by the Los Angeles Kings' Adrian Kempe (9) behind Kings goalie Jonathan Quick during Pittsburgh's 4-3 overtime win Saturday.

Avanche 6, Stars 4

Dallas 0, 2-4
 Colorado 3, 1-2-6
First Period—1. Colorado, Landeskog 20 (Barrie, MacKinnon), 5:45 (pp). 2, Colorado, Calvert 5 (Nieto), 7:57. 3, Colorado, Rantanen 14 (MacKinnon), 19:45 (pp).
Second Period—4. Dallas, Ladd 6 (Fedun, Jarmanek), 8:36 (sh). 5, Dallas, Seguin 9, 9:20. 6, Colorado, Rantanen 15 (Compher, MacKinnon), 14:53 (pp).
Third Period—7. Dallas, Seguin 10 (Radunov, Fedun), 12:14 (pp). 8, Dallas, Benn 13 (Segun, Radunov), 15:24. 9, Colorado, Landeskog 21 (Johnson), 16:40. 10, Colorado, MacKinnon 21 (Rantanen), 18:37.
Shots on goal—Dallas: 9-13-20-42. Colorado 20-9-37.
Power-play opportunities—Dallas: 1 of 3; Colorado 0 of 7.
Goals—Dallas: Khudobin 6-6-2 (20 shots-17 saves). Bishop 10-8-1 (16-14). Colorado, Varlamov 11-7-23 (38-36).
A—17,626 (18,017). T—2:56.

Canucks 5, Flyers 1

Philadelphia 0, 1-0-1
 Vancouver 3, 1-1-5
First Period—1. Vancouver, Tanev 1 (Gedobin, Horvat), 4:13. 2, Vancouver, Eriksson (Biega, Gaudreau), 8:09. 3, Vancouver, Leivo 7 (Boeser, Stecher), 11:12. 4, Philadelphia, Laughton 7, 16:29.
Second Period—5. Vancouver, Boeser 11 (Stecher, Pedersen), 12:07.
Third Period—6. Vancouver, Granlund 6 (Boeser, Pedersen), 12:07.
Shots on goal—Philadelphia: 10-9-13-32. Vancouver 8-8-24.
Power-play opportunities—Philadelphia: 0 of 4; Vancouver 0 of 2.
Goals—Philadelphia: Lyon 0-1-0 (19 shots-17 saves). Stolarz 2-2-3 (4-2). Vancouver, Markstrom 11-9-23 (32-31).
A—17,238 (18,910). T—2:22.

Predators 2, Devils 1 (SO)

New Jersey 0, 0-1-0
 Nashville 1, 0-0-2
First Period—1. Nashville, Gaudreau 2 (Ekholm, Salomaki), 18:43.
Second Period—2. Nashville, Gaudreau 2 (Ekholm, Salomaki), 18:43.
Third Period—1. Nashville, Gaudreau 2 (Ekholm, Salomaki), 18:43.
Shots on goal—Nashville: 9-12-9-42. Nashville 8-6-12-28.
Power-play opportunities—New Jersey: 0 of 4; Nashville 0 of 2.
Goals—New Jersey: Kinkaid 11-8-28 (28 shots-27 saves). Nashville, Saros 5-9-34 (34-33).
A—17,446 (17,113). T—2:57.

Panthers 4, Maple Leafs 3 (OT)

Toronto 0, 0-3-0-3
 Florida 1, 1-1-4
First Period—1. Florida, Barkov 14 (Hoffman, Dadonov), 19:56 (pp).
Second Period—2. Florida, Hrubec 2 (Hoffman, Dadonov), 8:03 (pp).
Third Period—1. Florida, Hrubec 2 (Gardiner, Rielly), 10:24. 4, Toronto, Marner 1 (Browner, Malkin), 16:48. 6, Toronto, Marner 8 (Rielly, Gardiner), 18:20.
Overtime—1. Florida, Barkov 14 (Hrubec), 3:24.
Shots on goal—Toronto: 8-10-14-32. Florida 10-15-7-31.
Power-play opportunities—Toronto: 0 of 4; Florida 2 of 4.
Goals—Toronto: Anderson 17-9-61 (33 shots-29 saves). Florida, Hrubec 1-1 (32-29).
A—14,177 (19,250). T—2:49.

Roundup

Kessel lifts Pens past Kings in OT

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Phil Kessel scored a power-play goal at 3:59 of overtime to give the Pittsburgh Penguins a 4-3 victory over the Los Angeles Kings on Saturday night.

Evgeni Malkin pushed a loose puck from the slot to Kessel, and he finished near the side of the net for the Penguins' fifth victory in seven games.

Tanner Pearson scored against his former team, and Matt Cullen and Bryan Rust also had goals for the Penguins. Matt Murray made 38 saves for his first victory since Oct. 25 at Calgary.

Murray stopped Tyler Tofoli's breakaway in the first 30 seconds of overtime. The goalie also denied a quality overtime chance from Jake Muzzin in the slot.

Capitals 4, Sabres 3 (SH): Alex Ovechkin scored his NHL-leading 20th goal of the season to extend his points streak to a career-best 14 games and had the shootout winner for both Washington.

Ovechkin has 17 goals and six points during his points streak and has scored in six in a row. The Stanley Cup champion Capitals have won five in a row.

Brett Connolly and Jakub Vrana also scored, and Phoenix Coyote made 25 saves.

Panthers 4, Maple Leafs 3 (OT): Aleksander Barkov scored at 3:24 of overtime to complete his first NHL hat trick and lift Florida past visiting Toronto.

Barkov slipped the puck past goalie Frederik Andersen from the right side of the crease.

Jonathan Huberdeau had a goal and an assist, and Roberto Luongo made 29 saves to help the Panthers snap a four-game skid. Mitchell Marner scored twice for the Maple Leafs. John Tavares added his team-high 20th goal and Andersen stopped 28 shots.

Flames 2, Wild 1: Matt Tkachuk scored the go-ahead goal midway through the third period for Calgary, and David Rittich made 34 saves at Minnesota.

Mark Giordano scored short-handed in the first period for the Pacific Division-leading Flames. They are 11-21 in their last 14 games, with 10 wins in regulation, and lead the NHL with 50 third-period goals. Jordan Eberle scored for the Wild.

Ducks 2, Blue Jackets 1 (OT): Daniel Sprong scored 1:19 into overtime to lift Anaheim at Columbus.

Adam Henrique won a faceoff in the Ducks' offensive zone, and Sprong beat Sergei Bobrovsky with his second goal of the night.

Canadians 5, Senators 2: Shea Weber scored the tiebreaking goal in Montreal's four-goal, third-period rout of the Canadiens



BEYNN ANDERSON/AP

Florida left wing Mike Hoffman, left, center Aleksander Barkov, center, and left wing Jonathan Huberdeau celebrate after the Panthers' 4-3 win over Toronto.

beat visiting Ottawa for the third time in 12 days.

Jesper Kotkanen and Matthew Pecca each had a goal and an assist, and Paul Byron and Jonathan Drouin also scored for Montreal. Carey Price stopped 16 shots to win his fifth straight.

Colin White and Mikkel Boedker scored for the Senators.

Avanche 6, Stars 4: Gabriel Landeskog scored twice, including the winner with 3:20 remaining. Mikko Rantanen added two more on the power play and shot Colorado recovered after blowing a three-goal lead.

Esa Lindell and Tyler Seguin brought Dallas back by scoring 44 seconds apart in the middle period. Seguin added another in the third and Jamie Benn tied it with 4:36 left.

Islanders 4, Red Wings 3 (SO): Mathew Barzal scored on a power play in the third period and had the only goal in the shootout to lift New York past visiting Detroit.

Anthony Beauverlier and Casey Cizikas also scored in regulation, and Thomas Greiss made 18 saves for the Islanders. Thomas Vanek had a goal and two assists, and Gustav Nyquist and Trevor Daley added goals for the Red Wings.

Predators 2, Devils 1 (SO): Ryan Johansen scored the winning goal in the sixth round of the shootout to lift Nashville past visiting New Jersey.

Fredrick Gaudreau scored in regulation and Iuse Saros made 33 saves throughout to help the Predators win their third straight.

Canucks 5, Flyers 1: Brock Boeser had a goal and an assist to lead host Vancouver.

Chris Tanev, Lou Eriksson, Josh Leivo and Maris Granlund also scored for the Canucks, and Troy Stecher had two assists.

COLLEGE BASKETBALL

Kansas edges Villanova to avenge Final Four loss

By DAVE SKRETTA
Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Kan. — Lagerald Vick had never watched last season's Final Four loss to Villanova before this week, when top-ranked Kansas had to endure every minute of it while prepping for Saturday's game against the Wildcats.

"We watched it for like, a week straight," Vick said. "It was definitely hard."

He'll have better memories of the rematch.

Vick poured in 29 points Saturday, Dedric Lawson added 28 points and 12 rebounds, and both helped the Jayhawks make just enough free throws in the closing minutes to hold off the No. 17 Wildcats 74-71 in a game that was nip-and-tuck almost the entire way.

Devon Dotson added 11 points for the Jayhawks, including four effortless free throws in the final 1:10 to help Kansas (9-0) end a three-game losing streak to Villanova — the last two in the NCAA Tournament.

"This atmosphere was just awesome," Wildcats coach Jay Wright. "We played a great program, just a great atmosphere — tough game — and they just did a great job getting Lagerald Vick in spots where he wanted it, and Dedric Lawson, you know you're not going to shut them out."

Still, the Wildcats (8-4) had chances in the final couple minutes.

Collin Gillespie's three-point play drew them within 69-65 with 31 seconds left, and Vick gave them an opening when he threw the ball away on the ensuing in-bounds play. But Vick atoned for the mistake by pulling down a defensive rebound, and then calmly made a pair of free throws at the other end.

Phil Booth's deep, line-drive three-pointer got Villanova within 71-68, and after Lawson made the second of two foul shots for a 72-68 lead, Booth added another driving layup to trim the deficit to two.

Lawson added two more free throws to restore a 72-68 lead with 7.5 seconds left, and Gillespie was fouled at the other end. He made the first but was forced to miss the second on purpose, and the ball squirted toward the Wildcats' bench, where a scrum ultimately gave Kansas the ball with 0.4 seconds left.

Once the Jayhawks inbounded the ball, they finally had a long-awaited win over the Wildcats.

Even if it came with far less on the line.

"We're still 1-2 against Villanova," Jayhawks coach Bill Self said. "We beat them in the Sweet 16. They beat us in the Elite Eight. They beat us in the Final Four. The game today was nice, but it wasn't a real game like the others were real games."

Booth finished with 29 points for the Wildcats. Eric Paschall scored 17 but was rendered ineffective down the stretch because



ORLIN WAGNER/AP

Kansas' Lagerald Vick, left, is defended by the Villanova Wildcats' Phil Booth during the Jayhawks' 74-71 win Saturday. Vick led Kansas with 29 points.

of foul trouble, and Gillespie finished with 15 but was just 1-for-7 from three-point range.

Kansas has now won 39 straight in Allen Fieldhouse as the nation's top-ranked team.

"They're a very good defensive team," Booth said. "We missed some shots at the end, but they did some great things defensively with their length. They just did a great job."

The Jayhawks led 33-31 at halftime, despite playing most of the way without Dotson and fellow starter Quentin Grimes. Grimes picked up three early fouls and Dotson had two, relegating them to the bench.

Their teammates picked them up with the kind of defensive effort Kansas sorely needed in their lopsided Final Four loss, when Paschall and Co. made just about every shot they took. The Jayhawks harried the senior forward into a couple of crucial turnovers while largely shutting down the point.

Villanova found its offensive stride in the second half.

Then again, so did Kansas.

And what had not envisioned as an up-and-down, back-and-forth showdown between national powers turned into precisely that. There were eight ties and eight lead changes, the majority of them in the opening minutes of the second half, as two of college basketball's blue bloods went toe-to-toe in the Fog.

"This was a good game that allows you to have a quality win," Self said, "and you play through the experiences that make you better. But Jay would tell you, we're both going to play in bigger games than this."

No Quinerly: Villanova freshman Jahvon Quinerly watched from the bench after an Instagram post earlier in the week criticizing his own program. Wright said Quinerly had apologized and it would be used as a "teaching moment." The five-star recruit has played in only eight games this season.



GERRY BROOME/AP

North Carolina's Cameron Johnson (13) reacts following a basket against Gonzaga. Johnson had 25 points, including six three-pointers as the No. 12 Tar Heels defeated the No. 4 Zags 103-90 Saturday.

No. 12 Tar Heels muscle their way past No. 4 Zags

By AARON BEARD
Associated Press

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. — Cameron Johnson had 25 points and six three-pointers while No. 12 North Carolina shot 55 percent to beat fourth-ranked Gonzaga 103-90 on Saturday night.

Luke Maye added 20 points and 16 rebounds for the Tar Heels, who led by 14 at halftime and never let the Zags closer than eight after the break. The marquee nonconference game featured two of the nation's best offensive teams who lived up to those reputations, yet it was the Tar Heels' work on the boards that proved just as important.

North Carolina (8-2) made 13 of 25 three-pointers to go along with a 42-21 rebounding advantage. That included 14 offensive boards that led to a 27-0 edge in second-chance points, which proved critical on a night when neither team missed too often.

Zach Norvell Jr. scored 21 points to lead the Bulldogs (9-2), who shot 56 percent after halftime and 51 percent overall.

Big Picture: Gonzaga: The Bulldogs sat at No. 1 in the AP Top 25 about a week ago, but they've lost two straight though both games were serious nonconference tests that are sure to prepare the Zags for later in the season.

They lost a close one last week-end against No. 3 Tennessee, then fell behind early Saturday night and never could catch up against a UNC offense that looked very comfortable on its home floor.

UNC: The Tar Heels offered a reminder that they have the firepower to score with just about anybody.

One significant concern, though, was they committed a season-high 23 turnovers that led to 29 points for Gonzaga — the kind of mistakes that could've

proved very costly had North Carolina not been shooting so well and dominating the glass.

Up next: Gonzaga: The Bulldogs return home to face Texas-Arlington on Tuesday.

UNC: The Tar Heels play No. 19 Kentucky on Dec. 22 in the CBS Sports Classic in Chicago.

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COLLEGE BASKETBALL

What letdown? No. 2 Vols take out Tigers

Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Admiral Schofield scored 20 of his 29 points in the second half and added 11 rebounds as Tennessee snapped a three-game skid with a 102-92 win at Memphis.

The Volunteers (8-1) avoided any letdown after a weeklong layoff for finals since upsetting then-No. 1 ranked Gonzaga last weekend in Phoenix. Grant Williams added 19 points for Tennessee.

Kyvon Davenport scored 26 of his career-high 31 points after halftime and had 11 boards. Tyler Harris added 10 points for Memphis (5-5).

Old Dominion 68, No. 25 Syracuse 62: B.J. Stith scored all of his 18 points in the second half, and the Monarchs overcame an 11-point second-half deficit to win at Syracuse.

Xavier Green had 15 points and Marquis Godwin added 11 for Old Dominion (8-3), which trailed by 13 points late in the first half and by 11 early in the second before rallying for its sixth straight victory.

After Elijah Hughes made a three-pointer to put the Orange (7-3) ahead 39-28, Old Dominion went on a 13-2 run.

Tyus Battle led Syracuse with 23 points on just 5-for-14 shooting.

No. 5 Michigan 70, Western Michigan 62: Charles Matthews made a layup just before halftime to give the host Wolverines their first lead, and the smooth-shooting guard matched a season high with 25 points.

Michigan (11-0) is off to its best start since it was 16-0 six seasons ago.

The Broncos (5-5) were in control for much of the first half and led by eight points with 2:58 remaining after Michael Flowers scored 11 of his career-high 31 points in just over two minutes.

No. 7 Nevada 72, South Dakota State 68: Jordan Caroline scored 21 points and the Wolf Pack mounted yet another comeback win.

The Jackrabbits jumped ahead 40-33 at halftime in the match-up of the 2018 NCAA Tournament teams. Nevada opened the second half on a 12-3 run en route to its



BRANDON DILL/AP

Tennessee guard Admiral Schofield, right, shoots over Memphis guard Jeremiah Martin in the Volunteers' 102-92 win on Saturday at Memphis who scored 20 of his 29 points in the second half.

fourth straight comeback of seven points or more.

Caleb Martin scored 20 points for the Wolf Pack (12-0), and Cody Martin and Trey Porter had 12 each.

No. 25 Indiana 71, Butler 68: Rob Phinisee hit a deep, buzzer-beating three-pointer, and Juwan Morgan scored a career-high 35 points to give the Hoosiers a victory in the Crossroads Classic in Indianapolis.

Indiana (9-2) barely won its fourth straight, scrambling to get a shot before time ran out. Phinisee eventually wound up with the ball in his hands and threw up the decisive 25-footer.

No. 8 Auburn 75, UAB 71 (OT): Jared Harper scored 23 of visiting Tigers' high 30 points in the Mike Slive Invitational in Birmingham.

In front of a crowd of 15,856, the budding in-state rivals raced to the overtime finish via the

three-point arc. After Harper scored 12 of Auburn's last 15, UAB's Jeremiah Bell hit a pair of triples in the final 40 seconds, including a contested shot with 10 seconds left to send the contest to overtime. Bell finished with 13 points. Guard Jalen Perry led the Blazers (6-4) with 18 points on 6-for-13 shooting.

Chuma Okeke added 11 points for Auburn (9-1).

No. 11 Texas Tech 82, Abilene Christian 48: Jarrett Culver scored a career-high 30 points, Matt Mooney added 14 and the host Red Raiders (10-0) raced past Abilene Christian in the final game at sold-out Lubbock Municipal Coliseum.

The last time Tech started a season with at least 10 consecutive wins was 1929-30.

No. 13 Virginia Tech 73, Washington 61: Nikell Alexander-Walker scored 24 points to lead the Hokies (9-1) in the Air

Force Reserve Boardwalk Classic in Atlantic City.

Justin Thomas, Kerry Blackshear and Ahmed Hill each added 10 points for the Virginia Tech, which won its fourth straight. The Hokies led by 18 points at halftime.

Matisse Thybulle scored 16 points to lead the Huskies (7-4), who pulled within seven points with nine minutes left but couldn't get any closer. David Crisp scored 12 points, and Naz Carter had 11 points and a game-high nine rebounds.

No. 14 Buffalo 73, Southern Illinois 65: Nick Perkins had 20 points and 11 rebounds, and the Bulls improved to 10-0, their best start since 1930-31, when they finished 15-0. CJ Massinburg scored 14 points, Davonta Jordan had 11 and Buffalo won its 17th consecutive home game dating to last season.

Sean Lloyd Jr. had 14 points for the Salukis (7-5) in their second straight loss.

No. 15 Ohio State 73, Bucknell 71: Kaleb Wesson had a career-high 20 points and the host Buckeyes held off a comeback bid. From the Bison

Ohio State went on an 11-2 run to take an 11-point lead with under 10 minutes remaining, but Bucknell stormed back to within three with a 10-2 run and a late three-pointer by Avi Toomer. The Bison got the ball with 14 seconds left, but a three-point try by Bruce Moore hit the front of the rim.

Keyshawn Woods had 13 points on 5 of 9 three-point shooting for the Buckeyes (9-1). Wesson had 10 rebounds.

No. 18 Mississippi State 70, Cincinnati 59: Quindary Weatherspoon and Lamar Peters scored 14 points each, Reggie Perry and Tyson Carter both added 12, and the host Bulldogs beat the Bearcats.

Mississippi State (9-1) used a 7-0 run midway through the second half — holding the Bearcats scoreless for more than four minutes — to break a tie game and take a 52-45 lead.

Cincinnati (9-2) had its nine-game winning streak snapped. Jarron Cumberland led the Bearcats with 21 points. Keith Williams added 15.

No. 19 Kentucky 88, Utah 61: Freshman Keldon Johnson scored 24 points, including five three-pointers in the first half, and the host Wildcats (8-2) made a season-high 12 three-pointers, including six from Johnson.

Both Gach led the Utes (4-5) with 22 points, followed by Jayce Johnson with 11.

No. 20 Arizona State 76, Georgia 74: Remy Martin scored 21 points, Ronello White added 16 and the Sun Devils (8-1) rallied from an 18-point deficit to win on the road.

Martin gave Arizona State its first lead of the game with a baseline jumper to make it 71-70 with 2:43 remaining.

Rayshaun Hammonds and Tyree Crump each scored 19 points for the Bulldogs (5-4).

No. 22 Iowa 77, Northern Iowa 54: Tyler Cook had 17 points and 13 rebounds, Luka Garza scored 17, and the host Hawkeyes cruised past the Panthers for their second straight win.

Freshman Joe Wieskamp added 10 points for Iowa (8-2), which opened the game with a 25-7 run and never looked back.

This was the last scheduled game between these two long-time rivals. They had split the last 14 meetings — but the bigger and more athletic Hawkeyes ran roughshod over Northern Iowa (4-6) from the opening tip.

Wyatt Lohaus led the Panthers with 15 points.

No. 23 Furman 93, UNC Wilmington 50: Clay Mounce tied his career high with 26 points and had 10 rebounds as the host Paladins improved to 12-0.

Furman long ago surpassed its best previous start to a season (5-0) and has won 19 of its past 20 games.

Devontae Cacok had 11 points to lead UNC Wilmington (7-1).

No. 25 Kansas State 71, Georgia State 59: Barry Brown had 21 points to lead the host Wildcats.

Brown scored the first eight points for Kansas State (7-2) and was key during a later 7-0 run. The Wildcats let Georgia State hang around with 19 turnovers leading to 25 points.

Jeff Thomas led the Panthers (7-4) with 13 points.

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Roundup

James, Ball propel Lakers past Hornets

Pair's triple-doubles leads to 28-point rout

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — LeBron James and Lonzo Ball gave the Lakers multiple triple-doubles in a game for just the second time, and Los Angeles routed the Charlotte Hornets 128-100 on Saturday night for its third win in four games.

James had 24 points, 12 rebounds and 11 assists, while Ball had 16 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists. Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar are the only other Lakers to accomplish that feat in the same game, doing so on Jan. 22, 1982.

James continued his dominance over Charlotte, improving to 27-1 in his last 28 games. He was unstoppable throughout on penetration, helping the Lakers outscore the Hornets 40-17 in the third quarter and build a 30-point lead with his second triple-double of the season and 75th of his career. He did not play in the fourth quarter with the game out of reach.

Pistons 113, Celtics 104: Blake Griffin scored 27 points and Andre Drummond added 19 points and 20 rebounds to help Detroit beat visiting Boston, snapping the Celtics' eight-game winning streak.

The Pistons also ended their own six-game skid with a solid 48-minute effort. Detroit took control with a 13-0 run in the third quarter and played well at the end of the fourth as well.

Kyrie Irving led Boston with 26 points.

Both teams shot over 60 percent from the field in the first quarter, and the game was still tight at halftime, with the Pistons up 57-56. Drummond punctuated his team's 13-point run in the third quarter with a dunk that put Detroit ahead 76-66.

Rockets 105, Grizzlies 97: James Harden had 32 points, 12 rebounds and 10 assists for his second consecutive triple-double, and Houston held off a fourth-quarter burst to win at Memphis.

Harden, who had 50 points in a triple-double in the Rockets' victory over the Lakers on Thursday, was 9 of 14 from the field, including 3 of 7 from outside the arc as the Rockets won their third straight.

Clint Capela finished with 26 points and 10 rebounds, while Gerald Green scored 17 points.

Mike Conley led the Grizzlies with 22 points and six assists.

Thunder 110, Clippers 104: Paul George scored 33 points to help host Oklahoma City beat Los Angeles. It was the fourth time in seven games George scored at least 30 points.

Russell Westbrook had 13



NELL REDMOND/AP

Los Angeles Lakers guard Lonzo Ball, right, drives for a dunk over Charlotte Hornets center Cody Zeller. Ball had 16 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists in a 128-100 win Saturday in Charlotte.

points, 12 assists, nine rebounds and six steals for the Thunder. Jerami Grant scored 18 points and Steven Adams added 16 for Oklahoma City, which bounced back from a 109-98 loss at Denver on Friday night.

Bulls 98, Spurs 93: Kris Dunn scored 24 points, Lauri Markkanen added 23 and Chicago rallied from a 21-point deficit in the second half to win at San Antonio.

The rally snapped the Bulls' three-game skid and ended the Spurs' four-game winning streak.

LaMarcus Aldridge had 29 points and 12 rebounds for San Antonio, which dominated the first half.

Magic 96, Jazz 89: Evan Fournier scored 24 points, Terrence Ross came off the bench to add 10 of his 19 in the fourth quarter, and Orlando rallied from an 11-point deficit to beat Utah and sweep its two-game homestand in Mexico City.

Ross shot 8 of 9 from the field and Nikola Vucevic added 15 points and a season-high 19 rebounds for the Magic (13-15), who beat the Chicago Bulls 97-91 on Thursday.

Suns 107, Timberwolves 95: Devin Booker returned from a six-game absence to score 28 points and Phoenix beat visiting Minnesota, giving the Suns a two-game winning streak for the first time in almost a year.

Deandre Ayton had 18 points and 12 rebounds for the Suns, including 10 points and five boards in the fourth quarter, when Phoenix pulled away. T.J. Warren added 21 points for Phoenix.

Scoreboard

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Toronto	19	11	.633	3B
Philadelphia	19	11	.633	3B
Boston	18	11	.621	4
Brooklyn	12	18	.400	10½
New York	9	21	.300	13½
Southeast Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Charlotte	14	15	.483	—
Orlando	12	16	.429	1½
Miami	12	16	.429	1½
Washington	11	18	.379	—
Atlanta	4	22	.154	7½
Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Milwaukee	9	9	.679	—
Indiana	10	10	.655	1½
Detroit	14	13	.519	—
Cleveland	7	22	.241	12½
Chicago	7	23	.233	13

Western Conference				
Southwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	15	12	.556	—
Memphis	16	13	.552	—
New Orleans	15	15	.500	1½
San Antonio	15	15	.500	1½
Houston	14	16	.467	2
Northwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Denver	18	10	.643	—
Oklahoma City	18	10	.643	1
Portland	16	13	.552	3½
Utah	16	14	.538	6
Minnesota	13	16	.448	6½
Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	GB
Golden State	20	10	.667	—
L.A. Lakers	18	12	.600	1½
L.A. Clippers	17	12	.586	2½
Sacramento	15	13	.538	4
Phoenix	6	24	.200	14

Friday's games
 Boston 129, Atlanta 108
 New York 126, Charlotte 124, OT
 Brooklyn 125, Washington 118
 Indiana 113, Philadelphia 101
 Milwaukee 114, Cleveland 102
 Miami 100, Memphis 97
 Denver 99, Oklahoma City 98
 Detroit 130, Sacramento 125
 Portland 128, Toronto 122

Saturday's games
 Orlando 96, Utah 89
 Detroit 113, Boston 104
 L.A. Lakers 128, Charlotte 100
 Houston 105, Memphis 97
 Chicago 109, Phoenix 93
 Oklahoma City 110, L.A. Clippers 104
 Phoenix 107, Minnesota 99

Sunday's games
 Atlanta at Brooklyn
 Philadelphia at Cleveland
 New York at Indiana
 Los Angeles at Washington
 Miami at New Orleans
 Sacramento at Dallas
 Toronto at Denver

Monday's games
 Phoenix at Detroit
 Milwaukee at New York
 Philadelphia at Dallas
 Sacramento at Minnesota
 Utah at Houston
 Philadelphia at San Antonio
 Memphis at Golden State
 Portland at L.A. Clippers

Tuesday
Magic 96, Jazz 89
 UTAH — Ingles 2-2, 8-8, Favors 8-8
 5-6 21, Gobert 2-6 2-2, 10-10, 3-14 9-15
 Mitchell 8-21 6-6 24, O'Neale 0-1 1-2
 1, Crowder 3-8 1-3, Seifolia 0-1 0-0, Exum 1-3 0-2, Kizer 1-8 0-3, Totals 28-99
 28-99 28-99

ORLANDO — Isaac 0-0 0-0, Gordon 3-7 0-8, Vucevic 5-14 4-4 15, Augustin 2-6 1-2, Fournier 2-10 2-10, Martin 0-0 0-0, Bamba 3-7 2-9, Ross 8-9 0-0 19, Grant 1-3 0-2, Simmons 3-8 2-8, Totals 34-72 17-20 96

ORLANDO — 14 19 22 30-89
 Orlando 14 19 22 41-96
 Three-point Goals—Utah 7-29 (Mitchell 2-5, Ingles 2-5, Crowder 2-6, Kizer 1-7, O'Neale 0-1, Rubio 0-4), Orlando 11-23 (Fournier 2-10, Martin 2-10, Augustin 2-6, Vucevic 1-3, Bamba 1-3, Grant 0-1, Simmons 0-1), Fouled Out—Orlando 12, Orlando 48 (Vucevic 19), Assists—Utah 17 (Ingles 5, Fournier 4, Augustin 5), Total Fouls—Utah 19, Orlando 48 (Ingles 10, Mitchell 5, Crowder 5, Seifolia 4, Kizer 3, Exum 1, Simmons 1), Coach Steve Clifford A—20-011 (22,300)

Pistons 113, Celtics 104
BOSTON — Tatum 6-15 5-6 17, Morris 3-10 3-4 8, Baynes 4-22 1-20, Irving 11-25 3-26, Smart 6-11 4-10, Kemar 2-4 2-10, Hayward 3-10 0-2, Williams 11-11 0-2, Rozier 1-6 1-23, Totals 50-100 22-96

DETROIT — Bullock 5-11 2-15, Griffin 6-10 10-23, 1-10 2-10, 3-10 2-10, 4-10 2-10, 5-10 2-10, 6-10 2-10, 7-10 2-10, 8-10 2-10, 9-10 2-10, 10-10 2-10, 11-10 2-10, 12-10 2-10, 13-10 2-10, 14-10 2-10, 15-10 2-10, 16-10 2-10, 17-10 2-10, 18-10 2-10, 19-10 2-10, 20-10 2-10, 21-10 2-10, 22-10 2-10, 23-10 2-10, 24-10 2-10, 25-10 2-10, 26-10 2-10, 27-10 2-10, 28-10 2-10, 29-10 2-10, 30-10 2-10, Totals 38-88 18-51 95

THUNDER — 22 22 28-113
 Three-point Goals—Boston 31 (Smart 5-7, Rozier 3-7, Irving 2-6, Crowder 2-6, Zier 0-3, Tatum 0-3, Hayward 0-4, Morris 0-3, Detroit 10-30 (Griffin 20), Assists—Boston 19 (Irving 4), Detroit 25 (Calderon 10, Johnson 5, Griffin 5), Total Fouls—Boston 21 (Calderon 5, Johnson 5, Griffin 5), Detroit 21 (Calderon 5, Johnson 5, Griffin 5), Technicals—Boston coach Delia (Defensive three second), Tatum, Griffin,



PAUL SANCY/AP

Boston guard Marcus Smart (36) fouls Detroit forward Blake Griffin (13) Saturday. Griffin had 27 points in a 113-104 Pistons' victory.

Lakers 128, Hornets 100

L.A. LAKERS — James 7-15 8-12 24, Kuzma 4-9 4-14, McGee 9-10 1-23, Ball 7-11 0-16, Hart 2-8 0-15, Mykhailuk 4-10 1-2 12, Zubac 3-4 0-6, Chandler 1-1 1-3 3, Wagner 2-4 0-5, Caldwell-Pope 4-9 1-11, Stephenson 5-8 0-11, Bonga 1-3 0-0 2, Totals 49-82 16-24 128

CHARLOTTE — Batum 3-7 0-9, M. Williams 0-1 0-0, Foulad 3-7 2-2, H. Williams 2-13 0-4, Lamb 4-9 3-3 12, Bridges 5-13 5-6 17, Kidd-Gilchrist 1-4 0-0 2, Kaminsky 1-2 0-2, Hernandoz 5-9 1-2 11, Monk 7-14 3-15, Graham 2-6 1-1 5, Parker 2-3 0-1, Bacon 4-4 0-9 9, Totals 39-92 15-18 100

L.A. Lakers 32 25 40 31-128
 Charlotte 22 28 17 31-100
 Three-point Goals—Lakers 14 (Mykhailuk 3-6, Caldwell-Pope 2-4, Ball 2-4, Kuzma 2-5, James 2-4, Wagner 1-2, Stephenson 1-3, Hart 1-4), Charlotte 7-29 (Monk 2-5, Bridges 2-6, Bacon 1-1, Lamb 1-3, Batum 1-3, Kaminsky 0-1, Hernandoz 0-1, Graham 0-2, Walker 0-5), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Lakers 52 (James 12), Charlotte 38 (Zeller 7), Assists—Lakers 34 (James 11), Charlotte 22 (Graham 6), Total Fouls—Lakers 20, Charlotte 19, Technicals—Stephenson, Charlotte coach Hornets (defensive three second), A—19,641 (19,977)

Bulls 98, Spurs 93
CHICAGO — Holiday 1-12 5-5 8, Markkanen 9-18 2-23, Carter 3-5 2-4 8, Arcidiacano 4-6 2-2 12, Dunn 11-19 2-2 24, Hutchison 0-2 0-0, Fortson 4-12 1-9 2, Lo-Jack 3-6 4-10, Payton 2-4 0-4, Harrison 0-2 0-0, Totals 37-86 18-61 98

SAN ANTONIO — White 0-3 0-0 4, Gay 4-4 0-2, Aldridge 10-16 5-11 28, Forbes 0-1 0-0, DeRozan 8-23 5-21, Cunningham 0-1 0-0, Bertan 5-9 2-4, Powell 2-3 1-15, Mills 1-4 0-3, Bellinelli 6-8 0-17, Totals 32-73 22-93

CHICAGO — 22 21 31 28-98
 San Antonio 28 34 16 15-93
 Three-point Goals—Chicago 6-29 (Markkanen 3-8, Arcidiacano 2-4, Holiday 1-10, Dunn 0-2, Payne 0-2, Fortis 0-3, San Antonio 7-21 (Bellinelli 5-7, Bertan 1-3, Mills 1-4, White 0-1, DeRozan 0-1, Gay 0-1, Forbes 0-1, Fortson 0-1), Chicago 16, Rebounds—Chicago 40 (Dunn, Markkanen, Carter 10, Fortson 10, Aldridge 10), Bulls 32, Assists—Chicago 16 (Arcidiacano 6), San Antonio 18 (Mills, Gay 4), Total Fouls—Chicago 20, San Antonio 18, A—18,354 (18,581)

Thunder 110, Clippers 104
L.A. CLIPPERS — Harris 9-14 1-12, Gallinari 10-16 4-5 28, Gortat 1-3 4-5, Gilgeous-Alexander 10-22 2-23, Bradley 4-9 0-10, Harrell 8-14 4-7 21, Scott 1-5 0-3, Teodosovich 2-4 0-0, 1-10 2-2, George 5-13 2-10, 1-10 2-2, Totals 38-75 15-22 104

THUNDER — George 10-19 6-8 33, Grant 8-11 1-13 28, Adams 14-4 4-16, Westbrook 4-17 2-13, Ferguson 1-2 0-2, Patterson 2-4 0-0, Noel 2-4 0-0, 1-10 2-2, Thorne 1-4 0-0, Abries 2-4 2-2, Diallo 4-5 2-10, Totals 42-90 17-24 110

L.A. Clippers 25 25 35-104
 Oklahoma City 30 31 25-110

Three-point Goals—L.A. Clippers 13-25 (Gallinari 4-6, Harris 3-5, Beverly 2-2, Bradley 2-6, Harrell 1-1, Scott 1-2, Teodosovich 1-0), Oklahoma City 9-22 (George 5-9, Westbrook 3-4, Grant 1-3, Ferguson 0-1, Abries 0-2, Schröder 0-3), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—L.A. Clippers 44 (Harris 9), Oklahoma City 40 (Westbrook 10), Technicals—Gortat, Bradley, Beverly, Oklahoma City coach Thunder (Defensive three second), A—18,203 (18,203)

Rockets 105, Grizzlies 97
HOUSTON — Gordon 21-0 4-0, Tucker 11-9 0-14, Capela 10-14 6-7 26, Paul 3-10 2-10, Harden 9-14 11-13 32, Nene 1-5 0-2, Knight 0-0 0-0, Foulad 0-2 0-0 0, G. Green 5-6 3-17, Totals 35-72 22-25 105

MEMPHIS — Temple 4-8 0-8, Jackson 2-4 0-2 3, Gasol 7-12 2-2 17, Conley 9-17 5-5 22, Mack 2-5 0-4, Casspi 1-2 0-2, J. Green 5-7 3-14, Noah 0-1 1-2, Carter 5-9 0-11, Selden 1-2 0-2, M. Brooks 3-4 0-7, Totals 40-75 12-17 97

HOUSTON 38 25 28-105
 Memphis 29 11 25-97
 Three-point Goals—Houston 13-37 (G. Green 4-4, Tucker 4-9, Harden 3-9, Paul 2-7, House 1-2, Gordon 0-8), Memphis 5-23 (M. Brooks 1-1, Jackson 1-1, Gasol 1-2, Carter 1-5, Conley 1-6, Mack 0-1, Selden 0-2, Temple 0-4), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Houston 36 (Harden 12), Memphis 35 (Gasol 9), Assists—Houston 24 (Harden, Paul 10), Memphis 20 (Conley 6), Total Fouls—Houston 22, Memphis 22, Technicals—Houston coach Rockets (defensive three second), G. Green, A—16,777 (18,119)

Suns 107, Timberwolves 99
MINNESOTA — Covington 1-8 1-2 4, Rose 6-12 1-15, Towns 11-26 5-26, Teague 3-9 4-5 10, Wiggin 6-15 1-2 14, Tolliver 0-1 0-0, Deng 0-2 0-0, Jones 0-1 2-1, Rose 11-16 1-15, Okogie 1-3 0-0 2, Totals 39-96 14-19 99

PHOENIX — Bridges 4-12 2-12, Warren 6-9 0-9, Booker 10-16 5-26, Jackson 2-10 2-4 6, Holmes 4-5 1-1, Evans 0-2 0-0 0, Crawford 2-8 0-4 0-4, Totals 41-90 16-20 107

MINNESOTA 30 28 24 97-107
 Phoenix 30 28 22-105
 Three-point Goals—Suns 15-35 (Rose 2-3, Garcia 2-5, Wiggin 1-6, Covington 3-9, 4-5 10, Wiggin 6-15 1-2 14, Teague 0-2, Jones 0-2), Phoenix 9-28 (Booker 3-6, Warren 3-6, Bridges 2-7, Melton 1-2, Evans 0-1, Jackson 0-2, Crawford 0-4), Fouled Out—None, Rebounds—Phoenix 36 (Booker 10, Phoenix 12), Assists—Minnesota 26 (Teague 11), Phoenix 30 (Booker, Crawford 7), Total Fouls—Minnesota 12, Phoenix 12, Technicals—Phoenix coach Suns (Defensive three second), A—14,244 (18,422)

NBA/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Wizards
get Ariza
from Suns

BY STEPHEN WHYNO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After a three-way trade fell apart over mistaken identity, the Wizards are getting Trevor Ariza after all.

Washington agreed in principle Saturday to acquire Ariza from the Phoenix Suns for Kelly Oubre Jr. and Austin Rivers, according to a person familiar with the deal.

This Ariza trade came together hours after a potential three-way deal involving the Grizzlies fell apart late Friday night over whether Memphis was including Dillon Brooks or MarShon Brooks. The saga included general managers informing players they'd been traded, awkward conversations to explain they weren't and finally the talks coming to an end.

Wizards players went through the emotional roller coaster of the failed trade after their loss at Brooklyn as Oubre and Rivers were still on the team bus to the airport and the flight home.

"We all understand it's a business," guard John Wall said after practice Saturday. "You never know what's going to happen, when it's going to happen. The first time I've ever seen a trade go dead and guys are on a bus talking about it. Kind of devastating for those guys."

Ariza, 33, returns to Washington, where he played the 2012-13 and 2013-14 seasons. The 6-foot-8, 215-pound swingman is averaging 9.9 points, 5.6 rebounds and 3.3 assists in 26 games with the Suns this season, the last remaining on his contract.

Phoenix forward Josh Jackson called Ariza "the ultimate veteran" and the ideal guy to have on a young team.

"He was always constantly teaching us," Jackson said. "He's been in the league a long time, been on a lot of winning teams, and whenever he saw something, even if it was the smallest thing, whenever he saw something that we weren't right or something that we weren't doing right all the way, he would take the time, even stop practice, and just talk and tell us the right way to do it and why."

Until the trade can be finalized, Oubre and Rivers won't at the Wizards' practice, and Ariza wasn't with the Suns. But Wall and Bradley Beal said they've each texted with Ariza since word of the trade got out.

"It's always good to add a guy like Trevor back — one of the best veterans and teammates I had in the past," Wall said. "We know what he brings to the table, and it seems like he's excited to be here."

To get Ariza, the Wizards gave up the 23-year-old Oubre, who they wouldn't part with in a potential trade for Jimmy Butler earlier this fall. Oubre was the 15th overall pick in 2015.

Bowls roundup

Rivers runs wild in Vegas Bowl

RB's 212 yards
leads Fresno St.
past Arizona St.

Associated Press

LAS VEGAS — Ronnie Rivers rushed for 212 yards and two touchdowns, Anthony "Tank" Kelly had a 70-yard interception return for a touchdown and No. 19 Fresno State beat Arizona State 31-20 in the Las Vegas Bowl on Saturday.

Marcus McMaryion rushed for a touchdown and was 15-for-29 passing for 176 yards to help the Bulldogs (12-2) set a school record for wins in a season. He also threw two interceptions.

Eno Benjamin rushed for 118 yards a one touchdown for the Sun Devils (7-6) in their third straight bowl loss. Manny Wilkins threw for 129 yards, with a 3-yard scoring pass to Kyle Williams and two interceptions.

Rivers put Fresno State back in front 24-20 with a 68-yard touchdown run up the middle in the third quarter and had a 5-yard scoring run in the fourth quarter to seal Fresno State's second win over a Pac-12 opponent this season.

Wilkins sustained an apparent knee injury on the final pass of his college career, which was intercepted by Juju Hughes.

New Mexico Bowl

Utah State 52, North Texas 13: At Albuquerque, N.M., Jordan Love threw for 359 yards and four touchdowns and Jalen Greene had six catches for 151 yards and a score to help Utah State rout North Texas.

Interim coach Frank Maile directed the Aggies (11-2) after Matt Wells left to take the Texas Tech job.

Love completed 21 of 43 passes with one interception. D.J. Williams had two interceptions, helping Utah State ground high-flying North Texas (9-4).

Aaren Vaughns caught two passes for 109 yards and two scores for the Aggies, Gerold Bright ran for 103 yards and two touchdowns on 16 carries, and Darwin Thompson added 93 yards on 21 carries.

North Texas quarterback Mason Fine was injured in the first quarter, and the Mean Green ended up using four quarterbacks. Jalen Guyton had four catches for 103 yards a score.

Cure Bowl

Tulane 41, Louisiana-Lafayette 24: At Orlando, Fla., Darius Bradwell rushed for a career-best 150 yards and two touchdowns to lead Tulane to its first postseason victory in 16 years.

Justin McMillan improved to 5-1 as the Green Wave's starting



JOHN LOCHER/AP

Fresno State running back Ronnie Rivers is tackled after running for a gain against Arizona State during the second half of the Las Vegas Bowl on Saturday.

quarterback, tossing a first-quarter TD pass to Terren Encalade and running for a late score while accounting for 217 yards total offense — 145 passing and 72 rushing.

Bradwell scored on runs of 15 and 4 yards while setting bowl records for rushing attempts (35) and yards for Tulane (7-6), which won a bowl game for the first time since the 2002 Hawaii Bowl.

The Green Wave also got a rushing TD from Amare Jones and outgained the Ragin' Cajuns 337 yards to 84 on the ground.

Camellia Bowl

Georgia Southern 23, Eastern Michigan 21: At Montgomery, Ala., Tyler Bass kicked a 40-yard field goal as time expired to lift Georgia Southern past Eastern Michigan in the Camellia Bowl.

Shai Werts kept the winning drive alive with a 29-yard scramble on fourth-and-10. Bass came on for his third field goal after Wesley Fields' two runs pushed Georgia Southern (10-3) 7 yards closer.

Bass also made a 50-yarder on the final play of the first half.

Eastern Michigan (7-6) had delivered its own big fourth-down play to take the lead for the first time.

Mike Glass threw a 5-yard touchdown pass to Arthur Jackson with 3:33 left on fourth-and-4, followed by Chad Ryland's extra point.

Georgia Southern took over at



JAKE CRANDALL, THE MONTGOMERY ADVERTISER/AP

Georgia Southern place-kicker Tyler Bass (16) celebrates after kicking the winning field goal on the last play of the Camellia Bowl on Saturday against Eastern Michigan.

its own 25 with a triple-option offense that attempted fewer passes than every FBS team but Army. Werts completed a 15-yard pass to tight end Elijah Richardson, but Georgia Southern fittingly covered most of the 52 yards with runs.

New Orleans Bowl

Appalachian State 45, Middle Tennessee 13: Appalachian State receiver Malik Williams passed

for two touchdowns on trick plays, quarterback Zac Thomas caught a scoring pass and threw for three more, and the Mountaineers routed Middle Tennessee.

Celebration Bowl

North Carolina A&T 24, Alcorn State 22: At Atlanta, Lamar Raynard passed for 292 yards and two touchdowns and Malik Wilson returned a kickoff for the game-sealing touchdown.

NFL

Texans rally past Jets

Watson helps Houston avoid 2nd straight loss

By DENNIS WASZAK JR.
Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — The Houston Texans were trailing late and facing a second straight loss after a nine-game win streak.

Deshaun Watson wasn't having it. The cool-headed, playmaking quarterback threw a 14-yard touchdown pass to DeAndre Hopkins with 2:15 left, lifting the Texans to a 29-22 victory over Sam Darnold and the New York Jets Saturday.

"It doesn't surprise me that he's able to stay controlled in those situations," Hopkins said about Watson. "He's done that before in big games in his career. On the sideline, everyone was composed."

And no one was more in control than Watson. "The game is never over for me," he said. "The plays are never over sometimes. I just go out there with the ball in my hands, put the load on my shoulders and lead the team to victory. I've been doing that my whole life and I have to continue to do that at this level."

After Darnold and the Jets took their first lead of the game on Elijah McGuire's 2-yard touchdown run, the Texans (10-4) answered right back. A holding call on cornerback Morris Claiborne on third down prolonged the drive, and Watson completed passes of 20 and 3 yards to Demaryius Thomas and 7 yards to Hopkins to get to New York's 14. Watson then found Hopkins streaking down the left sideline and launched a pass that the receiver somehow came down with despite being tightly covered by Claiborne.

"I wouldn't want any other quarterback in this entire universe other than him," Hopkins said. "The things he can do, staying in the pocket after taking hits and deliver balls on the money — not a lot of quarterbacks can do that."



Bill KOSTRUB/AP

Houston Texans wide receiver DeAndre Hopkins, left, celebrates his touchdown with teammate Demaryius Thomas during the first half on Saturday in East Rutherford, N.J.

Hopkins finished with 10 catches for 170 yards and two TDs. Watson finished 22-for-28 for 294 yards and the two scores to Hopkins.

Ka'imi Fairbairn's 40-yard field goal — his fifth kick of the game — made it 29-22 with 54 seconds left. Darnold and the Jets (4-10) had one more opportunity to try to tie — or win — but Houston held on. "To go out there against a good Texans team, it would've been awesome to be able to get that win," Darnold said, "but we just came up short."

The loss ruined what was a terrific night for Darnold, who made plays with his arm and legs all game. The No. 3 overall pick was 24-for-38 for 253 yards and touchdown passes to Robby Anderson and Andre Roberts. He set up an impressive 15-play, 73-yard go-ahead drive late during which he converted three third-down plays and a fourth-down opportunity.

On third-and-10 from the 19, Darnold took off for 14 yards — and a holding call on Aaron Colvin put the ball on the 2. After Darnold was stopped for no gain on a quarterback draw, he handed the ball to McGuire who pushed up the middle — surrounded by a surging mass of blockers who helped shove him all the way into the end zone for the score.

It set off a wild celebration by the Jets. But Watson and the Texans still had their own comeback in store.

"Thank God he is our quarterback," coach Bill O'Brien said.

Texans 29, Jets 22

Houston 3 13 0 7-12-29
New York 3 6 6 7-12-22

HOU—FG Fairbairn 41, 9:23.
NYJ—FG Myers 26, 2:01.
First Quarter
HOU—FG Fairbairn 22, 12:51.
HOU—Hopkins 45 pass from Watson (Fairbairn kick), 8:14.
HOU—FG Fairbairn 53, 4:35.
NYJ—R-Anderson 5 pass from Darnold (kick failed), 3:30.
Second Quarter
NYJ—A-Robert 13 pass from Darnold (kick failed), 8:39.
Third Quarter
HOU—FG Fairbairn 49, 12:33.
NYJ—McGuire 2 run (Myers kick), 5:00.
HOU—Hopkins 14 pass from Watson (Fairbairn kick), 2:15.
HOU—FG Fairbairn 40, 5:54.
A—77-882.

Fourth Quarter
HOU—FG Fairbairn 49, 12:33.
NYJ—McGuire 2 run (Myers kick), 5:00.
HOU—Hopkins 14 pass from Watson (Fairbairn kick), 2:15.
HOU—FG Fairbairn 40, 5:54.
A—77-882.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
RUSHING—Houston, Watson 4-26, Miller 3-8, Carter 1-7, Blue 9-5, New York, McGuire 18-42, Darnold 6-35, Cannon 1-13.
PASSING—Houston, Watson 22-28-0, Darnold 24-38-0-23.
RECEIVING—Houston, Hopkins 10-170, Thomas 6-59, Carter 2-55, Blue 2-9, J-Thomas 1-2, Griffin 1-minus 1, New York, R-Anderson 7-96, Herndon 3-53, McGuire 3-29, Cannon 3-24, A-Roberts 3-16, Kearse 2-9, Tomlinson 1-11, Leggett 1-18, Matthews 1-7.

Scoreboard

American Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	4	0	.692	264	253
Miami	7	6	0	.538	278	333
Buffalo	4	9	0	.308	201	320
N.Y. Jets	4	10	0	.286	292	359
South						
Houston	10	4	0	.714	352	281
Indianapolis	7	6	0	.538	349	300
Tennessee	7	6	0	.538	251	254
Jacksonville	4	9	0	.308	212	273
North						
Pittsburgh	7	5	1	.577	367	306
Baltimore	7	6	0	.538	321	241
Cleveland	6	7	0	.462	249	291
Cincinnati	5	8	0	.385	307	397
West						
x-Kansas City	11	3	0	.786	499	380
x-L.A. Chargers	11	3	0	.786	396	299
Denver	6	8	0	.429	309	348
Oakland	3	10	0	.231	244	388

National Conference

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	9	5	0	.615	276	246
Philadelphia	6	7	0	.462	281	295
Washington	5	7	1	.423	315	307
N.Y. Giants	5	8	0	.385	307	331
South						
x-New Orleans	11	3	0	.846	447	283
Carolina	6	7	0	.462	324	332
Arizona	5	8	0	.385	332	383
Atlanta	4	9	0	.308	316	367
North						
Chicago	9	4	0	.692	359	247
Minnesota	6	6	1	.500	282	291
Green Bay	5	7	1	.423	315	307
Detroit	5	8	0	.385	271	319
West						
y-L.A. Rams	11	2	0	.846	425	313
Seattle	8	5	0	.615	333	266
Arizona	10	0	0	1.000	178	77
San Francisco	3	10	2	.231	275	350

y—clinched playoff spot
y—clinched division
x—clinched division
L.A. Chargers 29, Kansas City 28
Houston 29, N.Y. Jets 22
Cleveland 17, Denver 16

Sunday's games
Tennessee at N.Y. Giants
Green Bay at Chicago
Detroit at Buffalo
Tampa Bay at Baltimore
Arizona at Atlanta
Oakland at Cincinnati
Dallas at Indianapolis
Miami at Minnesota
Washington at Jacksonville
Seattle at San Francisco
New England at Pittsburgh
Philadelphia at L.A. Rams

Monday's games
San Francisco at Arizona
Saturday, Dec. 22
Washington at Tennessee
Baltimore at L.A. Chargers
Sunday, Dec. 23
Atlanta at Carolina
Houston at Philadelphia
N.Y. Giants at Indianapolis
Green Bay at N.Y. Jets
Jacksonville at Detroit
Buffalo at New England
Cincinnati at Cleveland
Kansas City at Miami
Tampa Bay at Dallas
L.A. Rams at Arizona
Chicago at San Francisco
Dallas at New Orleans
Kansas City at Seattle

Monday, Dec. 24
Denver at Oakland

Alive: Browns edge Broncos

FROM BACK PAGE

since 1990.

"I think the tough environment, winning on the road's the most important thing," Mayfield said. "If we don't take care of business tonight — and obviously we have to move on and take care of business next week — none of that matters."

"So, being able to win on the road is something we've got to take pride in."

Combined with their win at Cincinnati last month, the Browns have multiple road victories for the first time since 2014.

Callaway's touchdown made it 17-13 and came with safety Justin Simmons in coverage because the Broncos were down five cornerbacks.

The Broncos responded with a 13-play drive that ate up more than seven minutes, but after Phillip Lindsay was stuffed for no gain on third-and-1 from the Cleveland 6, Broncos coach Vance Johnson sent in kicker Brandon McManus for a field goal instead of going for it on fourth down.

Jabrill Peppers, for one, was surprised the Broncos didn't try for the first down or the end zone.

"Absolutely. Absolutely. But, hey, it worked out in our favor," Peppers said. "We'd been stopping them all day and they didn't want to come away with nothing."

Exactly. "I wanted points there," Joseph explained. "We had about 4:35 left. We had one timeout and the 2-minute warning. I trust our defense to get a stop there."

It didn't happen.

Injuries: Langley went out in the first half and Roby in the second. Combined with Taylor's ejection — he was signed after Harris fractured his right fibula two weeks ago — and the Broncos were left scrambling in their second.

Browns 17, Broncos 16

Cleveland 7 3 0 7-17
Denver 7 3 3 3-16

First Quarter
Cle—Perriman 31 pass from Mayfield (Joseph kick), 11:49.
Den—Keenum 1 run (McManus kick), 3:18.

Second Quarter
Den—FG McManus 44, 8:16.
Cle—FG Joseph 40, 4:53.

Third Quarter
Den—FG McManus 42, 1:41.
Fourth Quarter
Cle—Callaway 2 pass from Mayfield (Joseph kick), 11:44.
Den—FG McManus 29, 4:35.
A—76-596.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
Cle
First downs 21
Total Net Yards 309
Rushes-yards 28-134
Passing 175
Turnovers 2
Punt Returns 2-9
Kickoff Returns 2-48
Interceptions Ret. 2-0
Comp-Att-Yds 18-31-1
Sacked-Yards Lost 2-13
Punts 4-48.5
Fumbles-Lost 1-1
Penalties-Yards 6-75
Time of Possession 27:21

RUSHING—Cleveland, N-Chubb 20-100, Johnson 4-28, Mayfield 4-4, Denver, Lindsey 14-24, Freeman 4-7, Keenum 2-1.
PASSING—Cleveland, Mayfield 18-31-188, Denver, Keenum 21-48-257.
RECEIVING—Cleveland, Callaway 5-35, Johnson 4-25, Landry 3-37, Njoku 3-30, Higgins 2-30, Perriman 1-31, Denver, Hamilton 7-46, Patrick 5-65, Sutton 5-42, LaCourse 4-43, Lindsay 4-20, Parker 2-18, Booker 2-17, Holmes 1-5, Freeman 1-1.



David ZALUBOWSKI/AP

Cleveland fans cheer during the second half of Saturday's game against the Broncos in Denver. The Browns won 17-16. Combined with their win at Cincinnati last month, the Browns have multiple road victories for the first time since 2014.

NFL/BOXING

Saints' sweep of Panthers remains on Newton's mind

BY STEVE REED
Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — Cam Newton keeps a black and yellow broom he was "gifted" by the Saints, hanging in his locker, some omnipresent motivation after what happened a year ago when the Panthers met up with their NFC South rivals.

New Orleans swept Carolina, winning both regular-season games in 2017 before eliminating the Panthers from the first round of the playoffs in January with a 31-26 win at the Superdome.

"The rematch is never far from Newton's mind."

"If you need any type of boost, kind of chip on your shoulder versus (these guys) I have a constant reminder each and every day when I look in my locker," Newton said, who will renew acquaintances Monday night with the Saints, a team he said "doesn't like."

Newton said the broom came from the Saints, although he wouldn't disclose which player.

Newton also received a bottle of "Jordan" red wine this past offseason from nemesis Cam Jordan, the Saints dominant defensive end. Jordan had promised to send Newton some "juice" if the Saints swept the Panthers.

"Disrespectful," Newton said flatly.

The broom remains in its plastic wrapper and Newton said he would like to stamp it "return to sender" if Carolina (6-7) can somehow manage to beat New Orleans twice in the next three weeks and sneak into the playoffs as a wild-card team. The Panthers currently trail the Vikings by a half-game in the battle for the second wild-card spot, but are given only a 9 percent chance of making the postseason.

Saints defensive tackle Sheldon Rankins said: "I know about the wine, not the broom — but whoever sent the broom is a comedic genius."

Meanwhile, the Saints (11-2) have already locked up their second straight division title and are aiming for home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs. The Rams are also 11-2, so there's no room for error.

"They got the juice, but at the end of the day we are coming Monday with a cup for our own, too," Newton said.

"Listen, they're a prideful group," Saints quarterback Drew Brees said. "They're well-coached and their backs are against the wall, so we're going to get their best performance."

Stifling streak

The Saints' defense has been among the NFL's best the past five games after looking like arguably the worst throughout the first two weeks of the season.

A 48-40 opening-week loss to



New Orleans Saints (11-2)
at Carolina Panthers (6-7)

AFN-Sports

2 a.m. Tuesday CET

10 a.m. Tuesday JKT

the Buccaneers and 43-37 overtime win vs. the Falcons had New Orleans ranked last in points allowed per game through the season's first few weeks. Now, the Saints are on a five-game run of allowing 17 or fewer points, the latest being a 28-14 victory at Tampa Bay last Sunday.

Linebacker Demario Davis said the transformation stems from players staying focused on their goals, learning from mistakes and trusting the coaching staff.

"You want to throughout the season perfect your process and, at this point, your process should be pretty much perfected," Davis said.

Jordan stepping up

Jordan has been a big part of the Saints' turnaround with 12 sacks.

"He's exceeded my expectations," Davis said of Jordan. "I knew he was one of the top pass rushers in the league, but to see firsthand the impact he has on games it's phenomenal."

Stopping McCaffrey

The Saints will surely be keying on Christian McCaffrey, who has become Carolina's all-purpose running back in the same mold that Panthers offensive coordinator Norv Turner once used Chargers running back LaDainian Tomlinson.

McCaffrey rarely leaves the field for Carolina, and with 926 yards rushing and 701 yards receiving, he has a legitimate shot to join Roger Craig and Marshall Faulk as the only players in league history with 1,000 yards rushing and receiving in the same season.

He has also scored 12 touchdowns in the past seven games.

No small breeze

Brees has averaged 302.4 yards passing with 13 TDs and four interceptions in his past seven games vs. Carolina.

Panthers coach Ron Rivera said the key will be to get pressure on Brees up the middle, similar to what the Cowboys were able to do against the Saints a couple of weeks ago, and to not fall for his pump fakes.

"We have to stay discipline," Rivera said.



FRANK FRANKLIN II/AP

Canelo Alvarez, left, punches Rocky Fielding during the third round of a WBA super middleweight championship boxing match Saturday in New York. Alvarez stopped Fielding in the third round.

Alvarez stops Fielding in third for 3rd division title

BY BARRY WILNER
Associated Press

NEW YORK — Canelo Alvarez threw a Garden party Saturday night. A short and powerful fiesta.

Alvarez landed dozens of body punches, knocking down Rocky Fielding four times and stopping him in the third round to earn his third weight class title, taking the WBA super middleweight belt.

Coming off his close decision against Gennady Golovkin three months ago to take the WBA and WBC middleweight titles, Alvarez could hear chants of "Canelo! Canelo!" long before he entered the Madison Square Garden ring for the first time. Throughout a lengthy undercard, it was clear who the sellout crowd of 20,112 came to see and cheer.

He delivered with power and precision, landing 73 punches, 35 to the body.

"That was the plan in the gym, to hit the body and then move up, and that's the result," Alvarez said through an interpreter. "You see the result here."

Only eight other Mexican fighters have held three division titles. And Alvarez, 28, says he is headed back to the 160-pound class he rules, with possibly a third go with Golovkin in 2019. The next fight, opponent unknown, is set for Las Vegas in early May.

"Canelo will fight whoever is the best, no doubt about it," said his promoter, Oscar De La Hoya.

If this was a one-off at 168 pounds, it was quite a show in his debut at Madison Square Garden.

"My goal is to make good fights for the people, for the public, and to make sure the name of Canelo Alvarez and of Mexico is held up high," Alvarez said. Fielding, 31, won the WBA crown in July when he knocked out Tyrone Zeuge in Germany in the fifth round. But the Englishman had never faced anyone close to Canelo's class, and it showed.

"I never shied away from the challenge," Fielding said. "I lived the dream, I'll come back."

"He is strong and all that. It was the body shots, the wind he took away. He placed the shots well and he caught me. I stood too long to try to mix it with him when I should not have."

"The better man won tonight."

The fight ended with 22 seconds remaining in the third after two knockdowns in the round.

Fielding came to fight, but was outmanned from the outset. He couldn't block the bevy of body punches launched by Alvarez, who floored Fielding with a left in the first round.

Alvarez did it again with a right to the head and a left to the body late in the second round, and that brought down Fielding's hands enough to expose the head.

So Alvarez used a huge right lead to knock down Fielding in the third round, and soon after finished it with a series of blows.

It really was no contest.

"What I always want to do is to make the best fight whether they're for world titles or not," Alvarez said, then turned his attention to the Garden scene.

"I'm happy and I'm grateful to be here. I hope this is the first of many."

The fight card was streamed on DAZN, a service that paid Alvarez \$365 million for 11 fights. This was quite a selling point for the red-headed Mexican.

On the undercard, Tevin Farmer started fast, then coasted to a unanimous decision over Francisco Fonseca to hold onto his IBF super featherweight belt.

Farmer lost to Kenichi Ogawa for the IBF title last year, but Ogawa then failed a drug test and the bout was declared a no contest. He outpointed Billy Dib in August for the belt, then defended by stopping James Tennison in October.

He won 117-111 on all three judges' cards.

"Nowadays, I really have a lot of anger built up, good anger though," he said, "and I just want to hurt everybody, when I'm in the ring. I don't have no sympathy!"

Farmer is 28-4-1, while Fonseca is 22-2-1. Costa Rican Fonseca's other loss came in his only previous title fight, to Gervonta Davis for the same crown in 2017.

Katie Taylor of Ireland won a lopsided 10-round decision over Finland's Eva Wahlstrom to keep her IBF and WBA lightweight championships. She is now 12-0, while Wahlstrom lost for the first time in 24 fights.

SPORTS

Top 25 showdown

No. 12 UNC knocks off
No. 4 Gonzaga » Page 26

NFL

BIG WIN



Browns keep playoff hopes alive with victory over Broncos

By ARNIE STAPLETON
Associated Press

WHETHER it was "The Fumble" or "The Drive" in the playoffs in the 1980s or the 11 consecutive times Denver had dumped Cleveland, the Broncos always served as the Browns' biggest bugaboo.

With John Elway watching from his suite at Mile High Stadium, Baker Mayfield capitalized on Denver's depleted cornerback corps and dubious coaching decisions in

leading the Browns past the Broncos 17-16 on Saturday night.

Mayfield's 2-yard TD toss to Antonio Callaway with just under 12 minutes left provided the winning margin for the Browns (6-7-1), who kept alive their slim hopes of ending the NFL's longest play-off drought.

The Browns still have a shot at their first winning season since 2007 and even their first playoff berth since 2002, thanks to their first win over Denver (6-8)

SEE ALIVE ON PAGE 30

Top: Browns safety Jabrill Peppers celebrates his fourth-down sack of the Broncos' Case Keenum during the second half on Saturday in Denver. **Right:** Cleveland wide receiver Antonio Callaway catches the game-winning touchdown in front of Broncos cornerback Bradley Roby. The Browns won 17-16.

AP photos



James, Ball notch rare double triple-double » Page 28

